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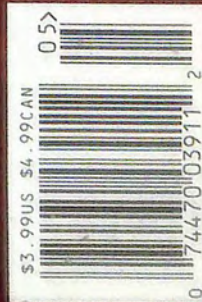
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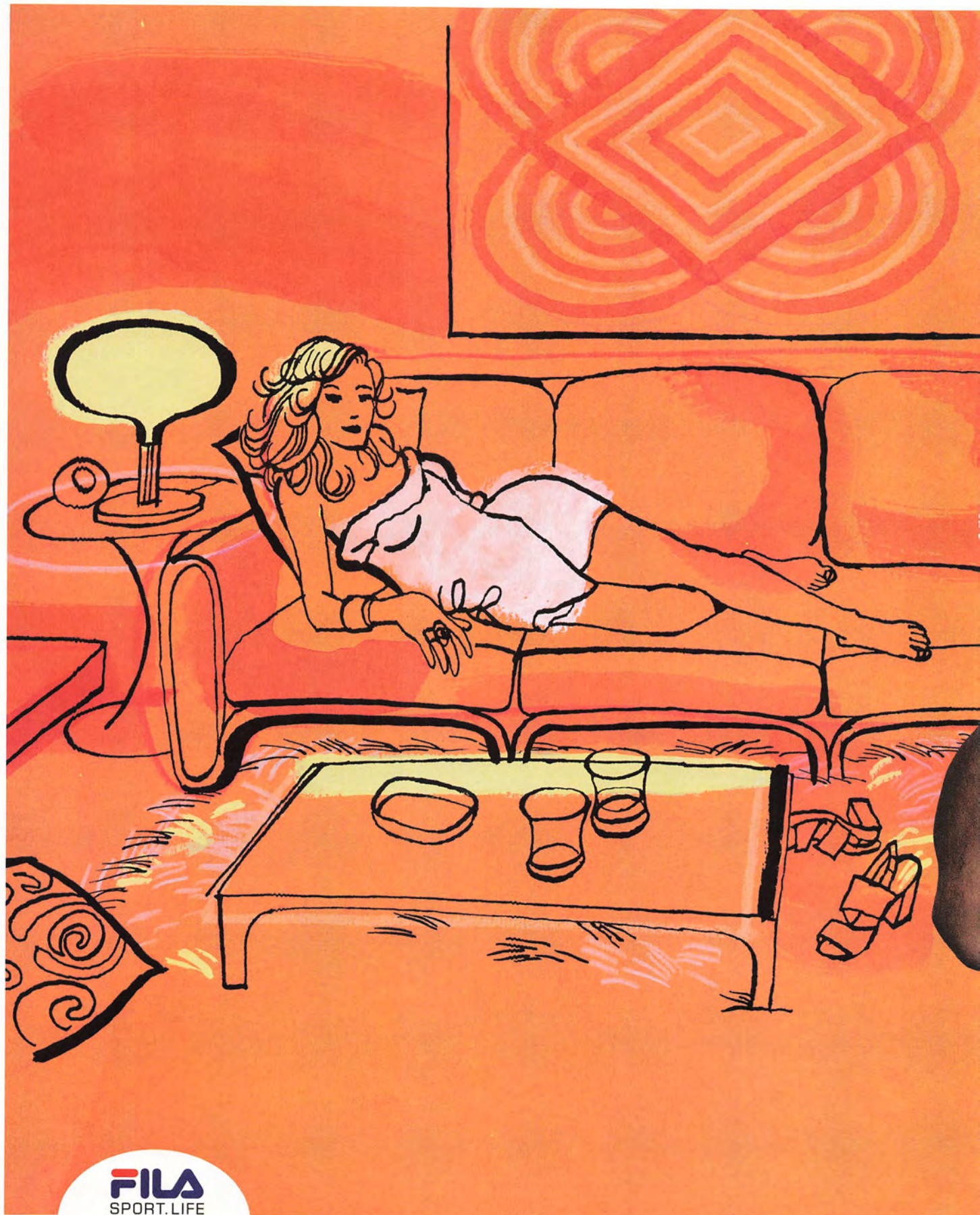




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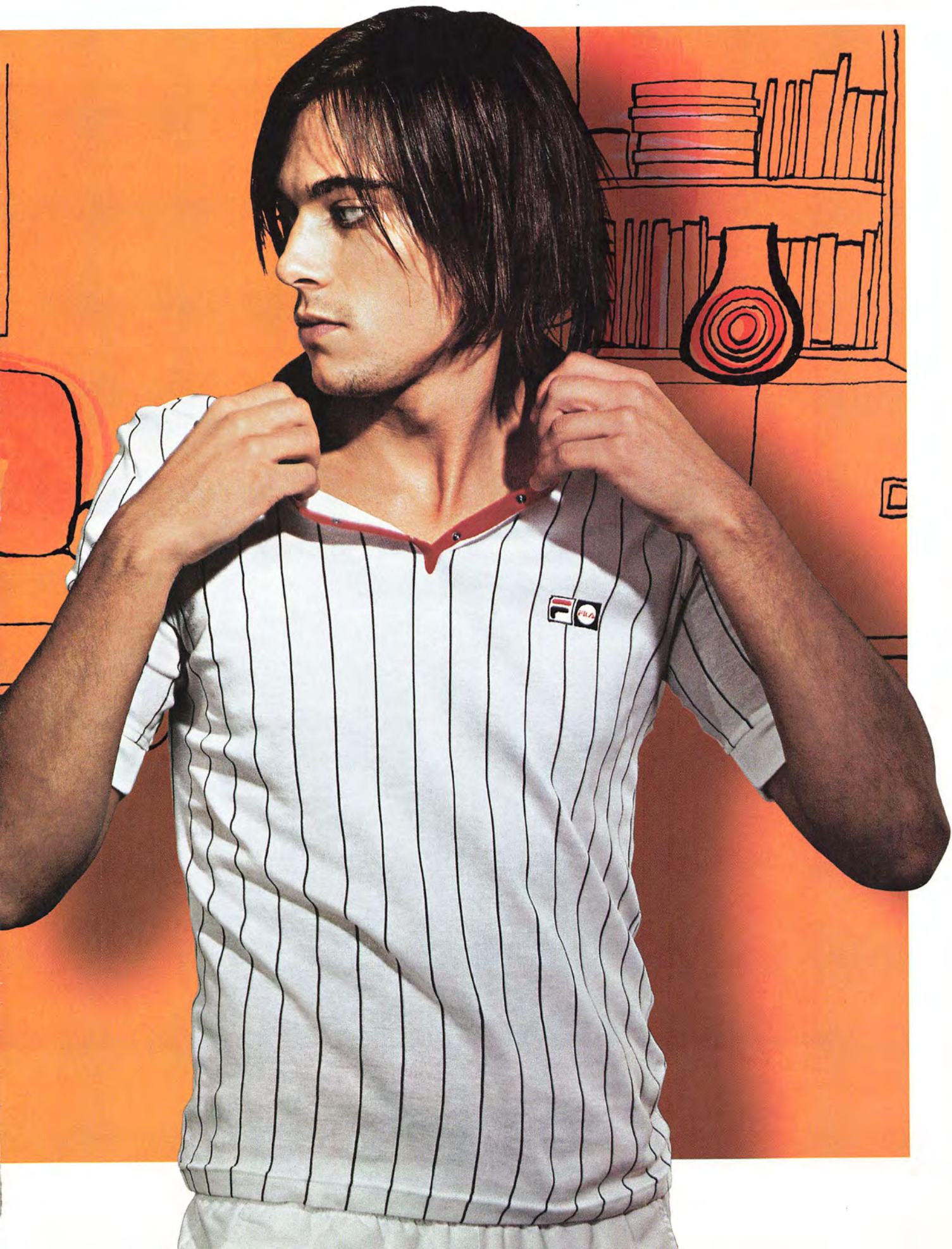
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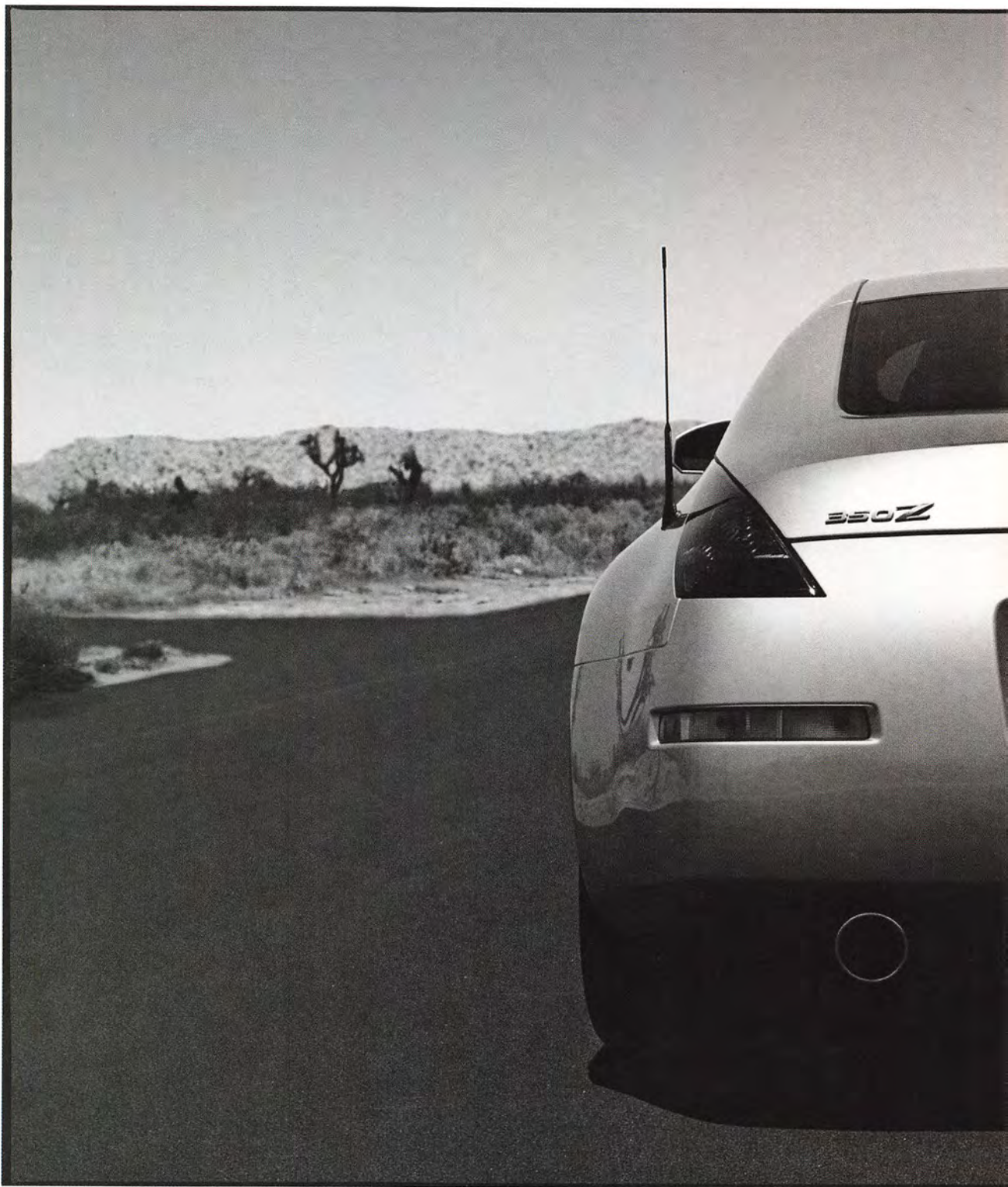




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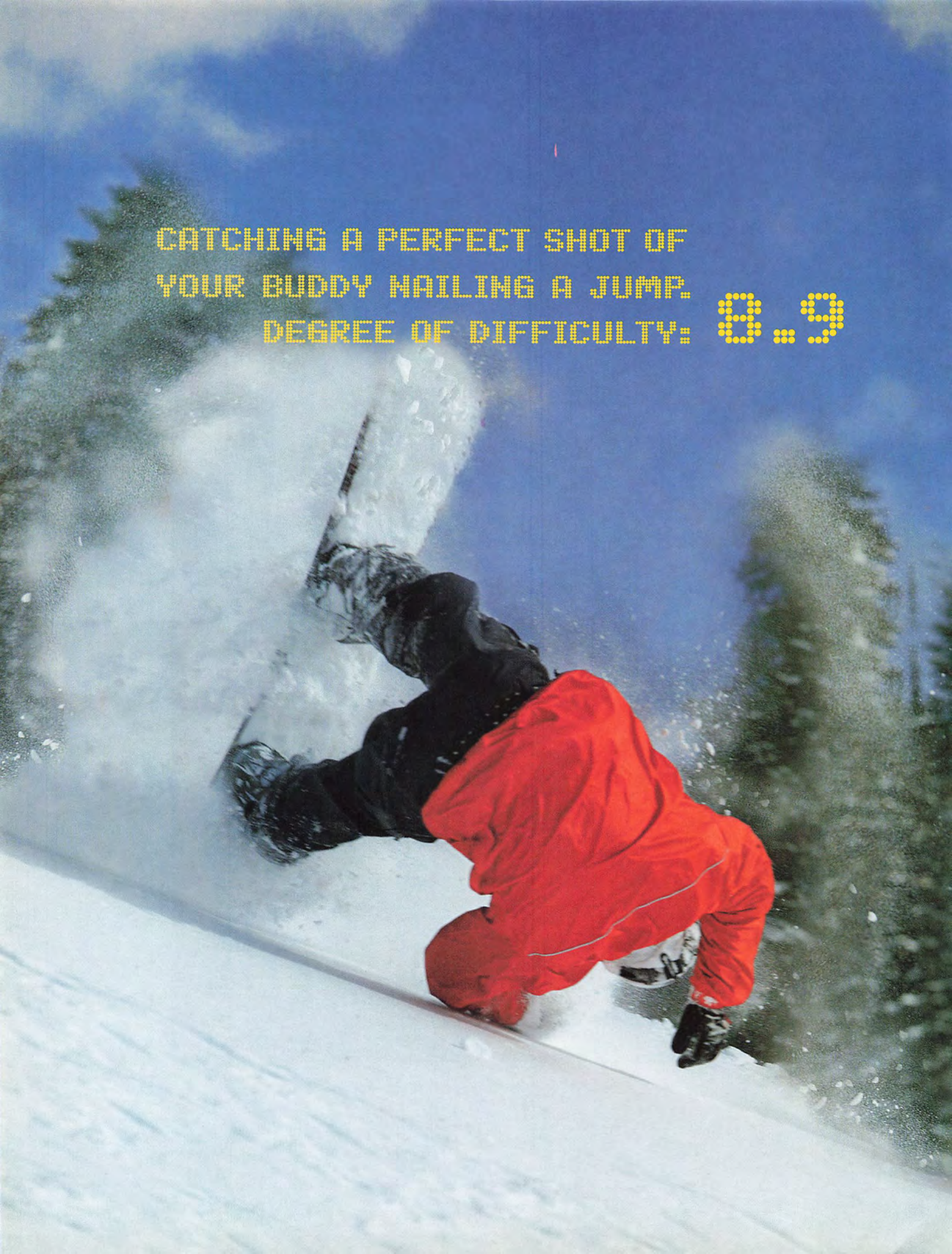
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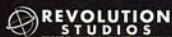
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▶ "Shock was never my goal." MARILYN MANSON, p68

ON THE COVER >>>>



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THE BAD & THE UGLY
BOOTS STYLIST'S OWN



84



52

★ BLENDER

FEATURES >>

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64 DOUBLE DATE: T.A.T.U.

Blender and a companion take teenage "lesbian" pop stars t.A.T.u. out for a romantic meal. Will they play footsie with us under the table? Fingers — and everything else — crossed!

68 MARILYN MANSON

Seven-foot-tall skeletons! Jackets made of dead lambs! Macaulay Culkin! The Antichrist Superstar leads one spooky life. His dirtiest secret? "I'm a mama's boy!"

72 THE 20 MOST ROCK & ROLL TOWNS IN AMERICA

Headbanging in Coachella Valley? Shimmying to electro-pop in Brooklyn? It's *Blender*'s guide to the hottest 'hoods in the country to get your rawk on! Plus: The lamest town in the nation!

84 LISA MARIE PRESLEY

She's been in bed with Michael Jackson, Nicolas Cage and Elvis! Well, maybe not Elvis. But she has Daddy's feel for music — and his appetite: "I want asses served to me on a platter for lunch!"

88 33 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FLEETWOOD MAC

Their early live shows featured a dildo named Harold. A Christian sect stole their guitarist. Their coke dealer almost got a credit on *Rumours*. And 30 other facts!

94 GREAT WHITE NIGHTCLUB FIRE

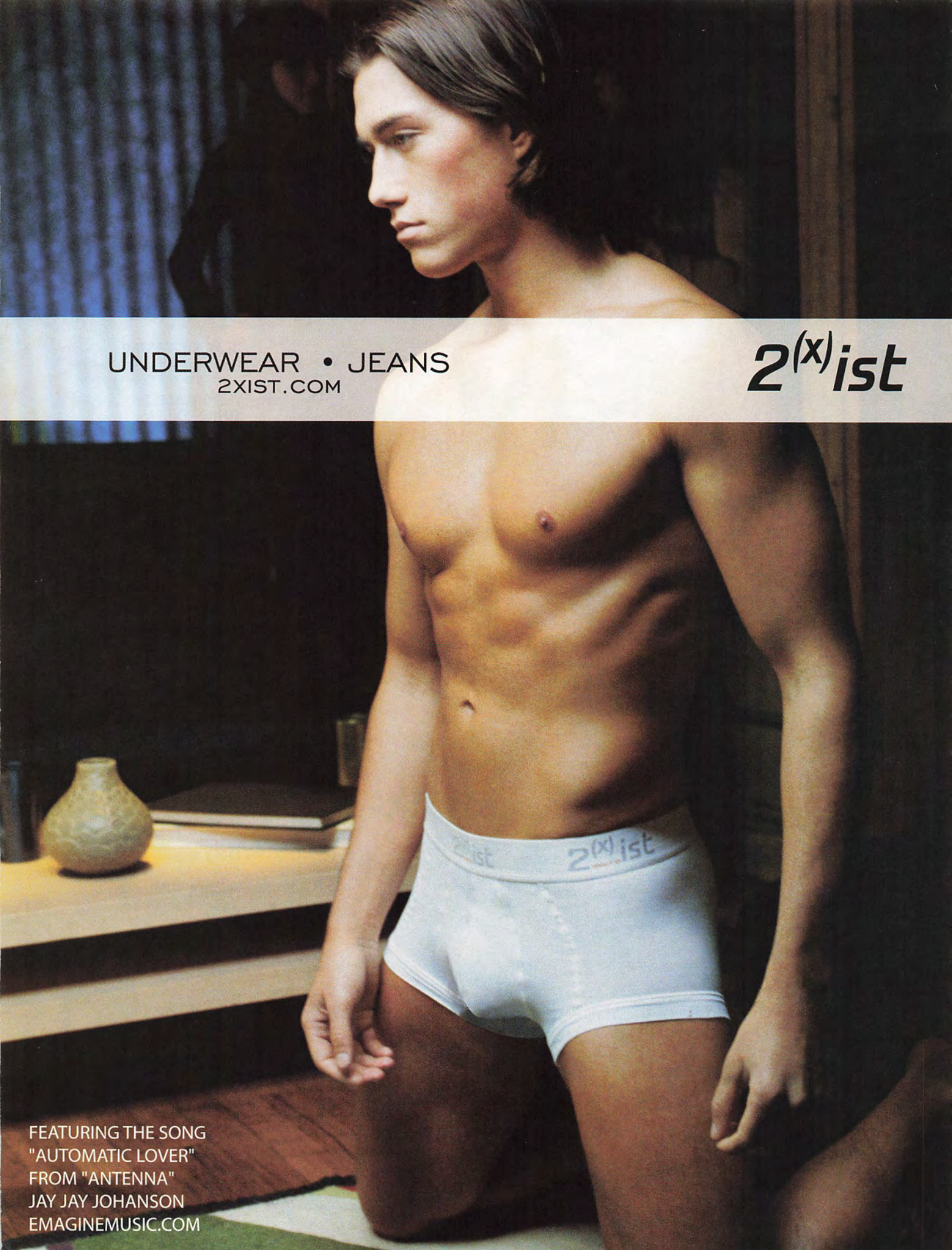
The true story of the tragic Rhode Island inferno — and of four rock fans who were there that night.

100 WHEN PRODUCERS GO CRAZY!

Brian Wilson recording in a swimming pool, Phil Spector waving a gun at the Ramones: Producers are a nutty bunch. Here's a list of the looniest.

104 THE WHITE STRIPES

It's official: Jack and Meg White are the greatest rock & roll band in the world!

A male model with long, dark hair is shown from the waist up, wearing white 2(x)ist underwear. He is looking down and to his left. The background is dark and moody, with a wooden shelf in the foreground holding a small, textured vase and some books. The lighting is soft, highlighting the model's physique.

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"AUTOMATIC LOVER"
FROM "ANTENNA"
JAY JAY JOHANSON
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100



Lillix: "Eighteen more of these, and we can *all fly!*"

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"Some people like to fuck. I like to have sex," explains the X-rated rapstress. Well, well, well!!

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> "Lying in the middle of them was sensational." EMINEM, p30



156

Urbanmageddon (Perry). Lego (Lillix). Judson Baker (Lil' Kim). The Eminem "Superman" video will be released only on the 8 Mile movie DVD in later April 2003. Eminem's next single will be "Sing for the Moment," released March 2003. Karm Cat/Idol

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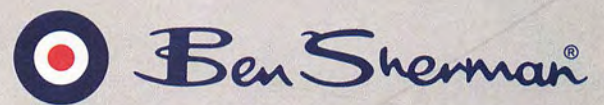
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GOOD ROCKIN'!

➤ PLENTY OF MUSIC MAGAZINES cover South by Southwest, America's biggest rock & roll conference. But how many magazines have the steel *cojones* to play the darn thing? I'll tell you: None. Except *Blender*. *

This March, garage-rock army Hookers N' Blow — *Blender*'s house band — steamed down to Austin, Texas (one of the rockiest towns in America — see page 72). Why? For an orgy of good rocking!

And we weren't the only ones. More than 1,000 hopeful young bands played the four-day event, hoping that some of the 6,500 music-biz nabobs conveniently milling around would sign them, write about them or give them money. . . . No doubt they imagined that not long after that — like South by Southwest alums the White Stripes before them (see page 104) — they would become rich and famous.

But Hookers N' Blow were just doing it for "fun." Despite sparse attendance at our 3 p.m. Saturday show at the Ritz, we took the stage in good heart. Thirty-seven boombastic minutes later, our cheeks flushed and our spirits high, we thundered offstage to accept well-deserved slaps on the back from fans and admirers alike.

But nothing happened.

As we made our way to the bar, I noticed there were fewer people standing around at the end of our show than there were at the beginning.

Some wag shouted, "Don't give up the day job!" Who was he talking to? It remained a mystery.

Later, I asked a friend what he thought of the show. He mumbled some nonsense.

Only two words were audible. One was *karaoke* and the other was *bad*. What could he have meant? I guess we'll never know.

Enjoy the issue!

ANDY PEMBERTON
EDITOR IN CHIEF

* OK, the *Plumbing Daily* house band played, too — but those guys really sucked.



Hookers N' Blow: No one likes us.

> I noticed fewer people standing around at the end of our show than at the beginning.



// JESKOVA26

electronica keyboardist/video artist
stream presets_the vortex/house party/reggae rhythms/planet jazz



Jeskova26 is a third generation musician. Her grandmother played timbales in cabarets and her mother was a saxophonist. After studying electronic music in college, she continues the family tradition, combining computer programming and keyboards while she DJ's.

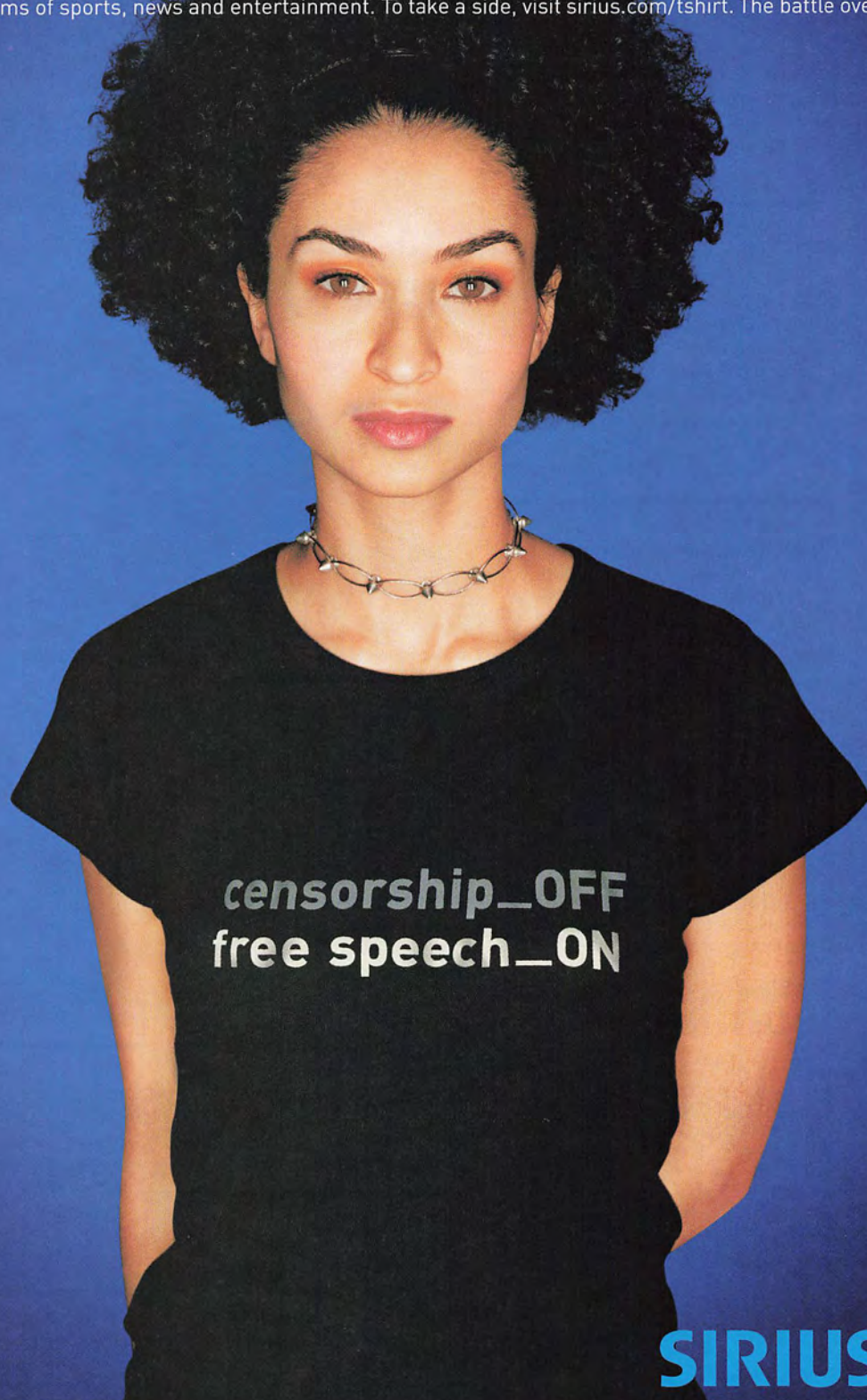
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You've Got Mail!

WE WANT YOU TO SHARE...



MAURICE GIBB, R.I.P.

Thank you for putting the lyric "Nobody gets too much heaven no more" on the spine of your April issue. The line is from "Too Much Heaven" by the Bee Gees, and it pays tribute to a great man. Rest in peace, Maurice Gibb. You will be missed.

BRETT CORNELL, CHICAGO

TRAINSPOTTER!

The upside-down lyric on the back page of your April issue ("They don't respect us — so let's surprise them/We'll drop the big one and pulverize them") is from "Political Science" by Randy Newman. I first heard it on the 2000 bootleg *Head*, but if I'm correct, it originally appeared on his 1972 album, *Sail Away*.

AMY RHODES, BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

ANGRY IN CANADA

I have a question about your recent article on Shania Twain ["On a Roll," April]. Have any of you folks at *Blender* actually *been* to Timmins, Ontario? Sure, the place has its drawbacks, but "drab landscape gutted by strip-mining"? Not as good as living in Switzerland? I'm sure there were many reasons why Twain left Timmins for the Swiss chateau in which she currently lives, but try as I might, I can't believe that being tired of visits to Uncle Buck's Trout Farm was one of them.

TREVOR GILES, TIMMINS, ONTARIO

Actually, at least half of the *Blender* staff commutes to work every day from Timmins. But it's good to see you sticking up for the old place.

★ Congratulations to the winner of *Blender*'s March Crossword contest, who walks away with a kickin' Sony PlayStation 2: Anthony Rollo of New York. Hey, shorty, it's your birthday. . . .

LISTEN UP! >>

CALLING ALL *BLENDER* readers! We want to hear from you! Write us a letter. Tell us your deepest thoughts and secret desires . . . er, well, maybe just your thoughts, then. If we print your letter in our next issue, we'll send you this amazing new SONICblue Rio Sport digital music player for your PC or Mac. It comes with skip-free music playback, at least 64 megs of memory, a stopwatch, a clock, an FM tuner and 15 hours of playback. Wow!

Send your letters to Letters to the Editor, *Blender*, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018 Or: your2cents@blender.com. Hell, yes!



WIN THIS!

Shania Twain, thinking fond thoughts of Timmins, Ontario



WRONG! WRONG! WRONG!

Is it wrong that I own and love Elton John's *Victim of Love*, which you included in your list of 13 CDs You Must Not Own Before You Die [April]?

BETH GOLD, MIDDLEBURGH, NEW YORK

You know, Beth, we've given you all the clues we can on this one.

HOW HIGH AM I?

The editor's letter in your March issue was very surprising. I can't believe some of these stars' heights. I always fantasized that Shakira was the type of woman who would throw me around. I thought she was a *lot* of woman. But it seems she's not as big and tough as she looks — she's just a puny little girl.

KYLE NUNN, DIX, NEBRASKA

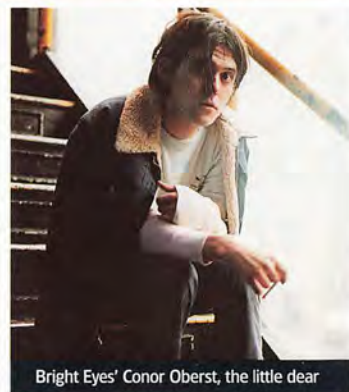
. . . *riiight*. Thanks for that, Kyle.

HUNGRY FOR MEN!

I love *Blender*! I've recently subscribed, and my friends are doing the same. As a female, I need to know: When can us women see some men on the cover?

The last few issues have featured women. No offense meant to them, but damn — we need some eye candy, too!

CAMIE QUILLLEN, TOLEDO, OHIO



Bright Eyes' Conor Oberst, the little dear

WHAT A SPECTACLE!

Your article on Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes ["Strange Creature," January/February] was great. You guys are dead-on: Oberst's incredible discography and scrawny good looks keep us short-haired girls fighting to look nonchalant behind our horn-rims.

JESSICA RENTZ, ATHENS, GEORGIA

I'M HOPELESSLY CONFUSED!

I have one frustration in life: In spite of my devoted studies and careful repeated examinations, I am unable to identify the Beu Sisters ["Awww . . ."]



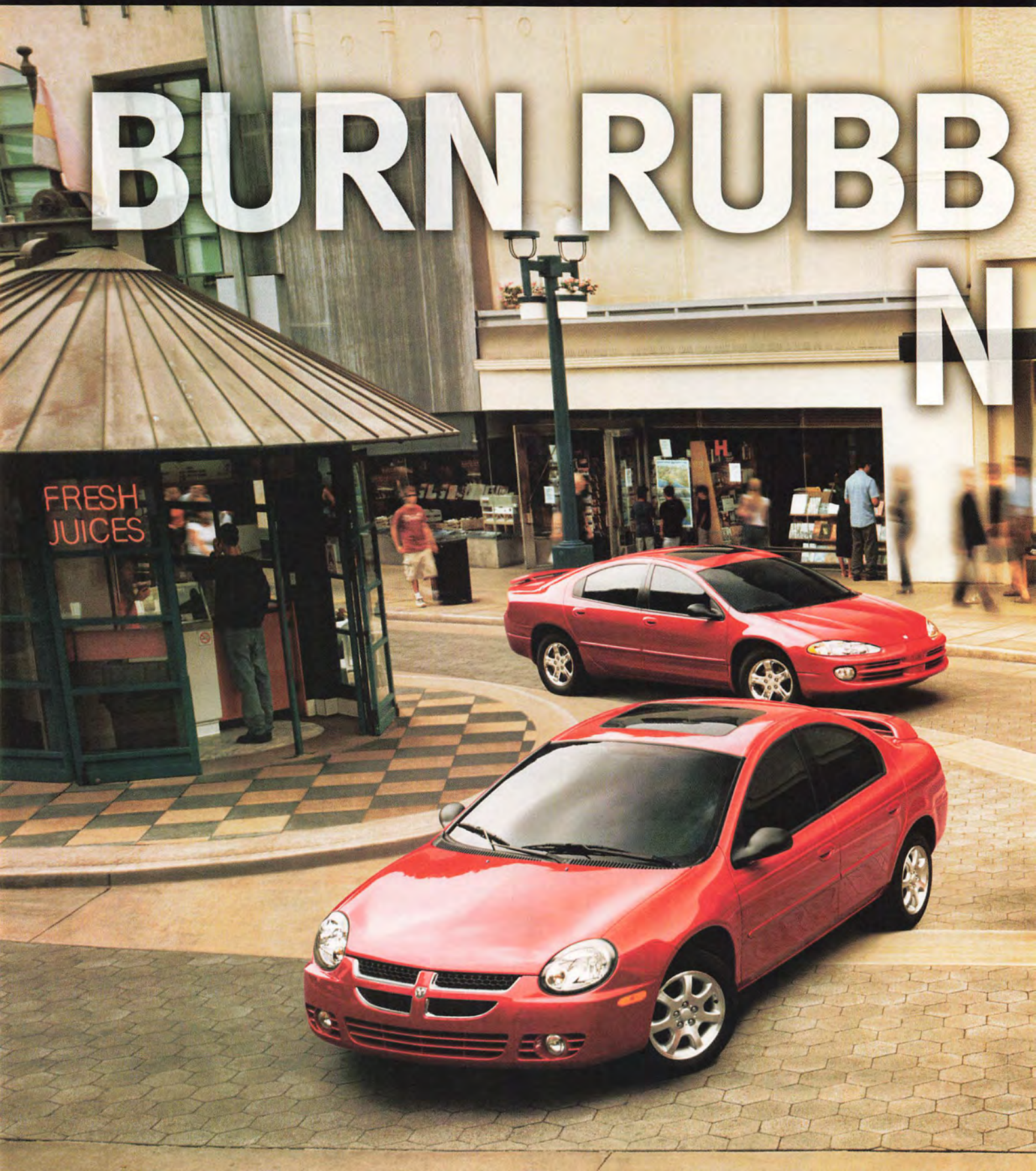
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Frankly, Timothy Eaton, who cares which one is which?

January/February] by name due to the fact that they're looking into a mirror. Your caption ID'ing them was confusing. OK, dammit — I *am* high. But in a future issue, could you please position them in a photo so I can identify them more easily? I mean, they're hot! You may ask why this is important to me. After all, does anyone complain that he's not certain which Olsen twin is which? Still, just put a good picture of those Beau Sisters in again. OK?

TIMOTHY EATON, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

INTERESTING?

I noticed something interesting while flipping through the pages of your January/February issue: The same Ramones T-shirt appears four times! On page 6 (worn by Elijah Wood), page 40 (Eddie Vedder), page 104 (Shania Twain) and page 107 (Wood again). I think I deserve some free stuff for noticing, don't you?

ANTHONY KACHINSKI, VALLEY CITY, OHIO

Well, we'll be damned.

MOBY'S DING-A-LING

Moby, obviously not an innovator, is most likely not the creator of the sock-on-cock look you guys have featured so prominently on your Letters page recently. Maybe the sock-jock look deserves a bigger space, just like Superfan! I'm sure that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of performers you could picture sporting the infamous look. Members in good standing: the Red Hot Chili Peppers' Anthony Kiedis and No Doubt's Adrian Young.

TED FIELDS, NIAHTIC, CONNECTICUT

HEY — I'M A MOLECULAR BIOLOGIST, TOO!

I read *Blender* because it's funny and it keeps me up to date about music. However, your January/February issue shocked me in ways I couldn't imagine. In the Rock Geniuses piece, your interview with Bonnie Bassler, winner of a MacArthur "genius grant," left me

LETTERS >>

SUPERFAN!

Bringing out the stalker in you since 2001



John Piermarini and Justin Timberlake



Debbie Hall and Angus Young



Sara Luyke-Roskott and the Vines' Craig Nicholls



Paul Ramirez and Janet Jackson



Ryan Koneval and Ricky Martin (in the Menudo years)



Lizz Newton and Eve



★ MEMORIAL DAY IS upon us and so, too, is the best season for the Superfan! Enjoy these summer days as all Superfans should: with camera in hand and music celeb in mind. That's right! Go get your picture taken with your favorite musician and win iRiver's excellent iFP-190T flash-based memory player. Then mail it to us at Superfan!, *Blender* magazine, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018. Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number.

speechless. A molecular biologist in *Blender*? It's great to see a scientist in your mag. My respect for *Blender* has increased — I fear I'm doomed to a lifetime of reading you. Thanks for continually putting out a kick-ass magazine. (And if you ever need a molecular biologist on staff, I'm there!)

NISHAL MOHAN, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

You'd be surprised how often a kick-ass

music magazine has need for a molecular biologist. We'll be in touch.

NERDY NERD NERD NERD!

You recently ran a photo of Yes's Jon Anderson [Reissues, January/February] captioned "Greetings, nerds!" Your reviewer also noted that "nerds loved them." This use of the word *nerd*, meaning someone who is socially inept,



Shania is a punk rocker...



Moby: Sock of it all!

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Yes's Jon Anderson: "Greetings, my wonderful nerd army!"

to indicate Yes fans is not true. Take it from me — I've attended many Yes concerts since 1974. I remember seeing mostly pesky hippies in attendance. Nearly every musician for miles around would go. I've never worn glasses and wouldn't tape them in the middle if I did. Every Yes show I've seen has been amazing. If hearing something amazing is reserved just for nerds, what do you suggest I listen to instead? Starcastle, maybe? Whoever wrote that only nerds love Yes is nothing but a dork. So take that, you dork! Yes.

CHARLIE FAEGE, ST. LOUIS

I AM 100 YEARS OLD!

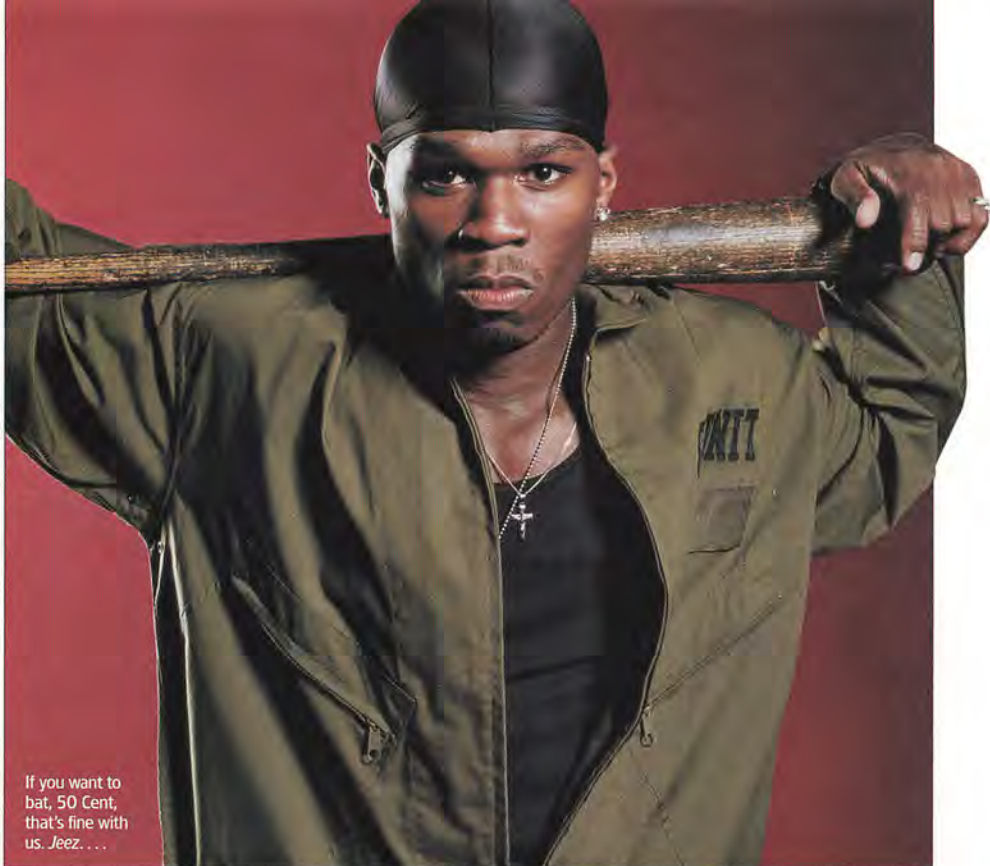
I am perhaps your oldest reader, having reached my hundredth birthday last September. I was around to witness the rise of rock music from its beginnings in the early '50s.

So let me point out a *Blender* blunder in your list of the Top 50 Rock Geniuses of All Time [January/February]. Eminem in fourth place? Outrageous. Consider your omissions: Ray Charles, Janis Joplin, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, Randy Newman... yet you include Dr. Dre, Tupac Shakur, Andy Warhol and... oh, why go on? Please, just X out Eminem and let me die in peace. I even like the kid — but over the others I've mentioned here?

LOUIS GALLO, RADFORD, VIRGINIA
Uh... Andy Warhol?

AWFUL COVER VERSION

50 Cent is cool, but too scary ["New Tough in Town," April]. I bet he could win over more fans with my remix of "In da Club," entitled "In da Tub": "You could find me in the tub, bottle full of Mr. Bub/Mama I got the Dial if you into soapy suds/I'm not into takin'



If you want to bat, 50 Cent, that's fine with us. Jeez...



"What'd I Say": A song and a way of life.

showers/I'm into rub-a-dub-dub/So come get in the tub/If U into gettin' scrubbed" We'll split the profits: You can call me 50 Percent!

RON DECTIETH, ISLIP, NEW YORK

YOU LUCKY PEOPLE!

I couldn't believe it when I read the lyric at the bottom of page 48 of your March issue: "Keepin' your head above water/Making a wave when you can" — it's from the theme song to the hit '70s sitcom *Good Times*. That was one of my favorite television shows as a kid.

Suffice it to say that I never expected you to print a lyric from a TV theme. That's just one of the things that makes *Blender* so fresh. Keep up the great work. Ain't we lucky we got you.

WINSTON MATHIS, CORSICANA, TEXAS

UNBELIEVABLY, THIS IS TRUE

Last night, I got pulled over for speeding, talking on a cellphone and making an illegal right turn. It would have been my third ticket in two months, so I was shitting my pants. The cop told me why he stopped me — and then he noticed my March issue of *Blender*, with Shakira on the cover, sitting shotgun. He stuttered and asked, "Is that Shakira on that magazine?" I said, "As a matter of fact it is — would you like to see it?" He decided to cut me a deal. Instead of a suspended license and \$500 in fines, he let me go — but he bagged my *Blender*. So thanks for putting hot girls on your cover. It saved my balls.

BRIAN FERNEKES, POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK



That's what we like: Well-armed readers.

BJÖRK STALKING

Thanks for the Top 50 Rock Goddesses [March]. Not only were you right on with your picks, it kept me in my room for hours! Thanks also for the picture of Björk. She doesn't get enough credit in the U.S. I told one of my friends that Björk had been stalked. She said, "Who would stalk a stupid little elf?" Please help trash this notion by posting more pics of Björk — there are plenty of hot, tempting photos of her out there!

CARLETON WONG, AIEA, HAWAII

AN EYE FOR AN EYE!

The only thing better than *Blender's* March issue was the revenge I got on my brother when he stole my copy. He came over to my place, used the bathroom and left. The next night, I went to his house and left with his toothbrush and cellphone. He called me the next morning and told me to bring his stuff back. I denied everything, hung up and went back to sleep. No one steals my *Blender* without a little payback.

JORDAN GILLIAM, ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

GOOD NAME FOR A BAND! >>>

REASONING WITH BEARS

ROB LEGGATT, BAYONNE, NEW JERSEY

Do you have a good name for a band? Send it to *Blender*! We'll pick the best, and — if it's yours — you'll win a Sony Ericsson T300 mobile phone like this!

Please send your entry to
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1040 Avenue of the Americas,
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Or: bandnames@blender.com. Good luck!





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BURNER

ALL THE MUSIC. ALL THE NEWS. ALL THE TIME

★ EMINEM'S VIDEO ★ MICHAEL JACKSON DOLL ★ OSAMA BIN LADEN'S NIECE >>>

It's a Dirty Job....

Eminem makes lewd new video with 100 ladies!



Porn superstar Gina Lynn and her new friend



BLENDER has gained an exclusive look at the video for Eminem's new single, "Superman," which features the hip-hop star entangled with nearly 100 models all wearing scanty

— and frequently transparent — lingerie.

"Seeing all those women in their underwear was dope," Eminem said. "There have to be some perks. And lying in the middle of them was sensational. It must be every man's dream, and I loved every minute I was in there."

A further "perk" the shoot provided was Eminem's intimate sex scene with porn princess Gina Lynn, the star of such non-Oscar contenders as *California Cocksuckers 20* and *Buttslammers 21*. Lynn and Eminem spent hours performing in bed together.

"I had that 'come fuck me' look," Lynn said of the pair's sex scenes. "I'm really good at that, and I think I was driving him crazy. . . . He kept saying how much he liked my eyes."

The "porn spoof" video, directed by Paul Hunter at the Standard studio in Los Angeles, cost over \$1 million. Too explicit for MTV, the clip appears only on the new *8 Mile* DVD. **CLARISSA LASKY**

"It must be every man's dream. I loved every minute I was in there."





> "Seeing all those women in their underwear was dope." EMINEM



Together at last: Shakira and Márquez

TWO AMIGOS

Is Shakira really pals with author Gabriel García Márquez? Yes!

"I WAS VERY thrilled to see him again," exclaimed multiplatinum bombshell Shakira of her famous and unlikely fan, Nobel Prize-winning novelist Gabriel García Márquez.

The author, best known for his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, popped backstage with his grandchildren after two sold-out February shows at Mexico City's Foro Sol stadium (capacity 48,000).

Márquez, who has known the Colombian singer since she was 16, is a regular phone pal of Shakira's.

"We have such crazy schedules," Shakira told *Blender*, "that it can be hard to see each other. But the next day, our families all went to lunch at his home in Mexico City."

Shakira is currently wrapping up the European portion of her ongoing world tour. **CRAIG MARKS**



News Roundup!

Stock-car-racing enthusiast **NELLY** has purchased, in part, a NASCAR truck team called Billy Ballew Motorsports. The governing association hopes the rapper's involvement will increase minority interest in racing.

Celebrated producer **PHIL SPECTOR** has claimed that he would be cleared of murder charges in the shooting death of actress Lana Clarkson. But Los Angeles police officials contradicted him, saying he is still under suspicion.

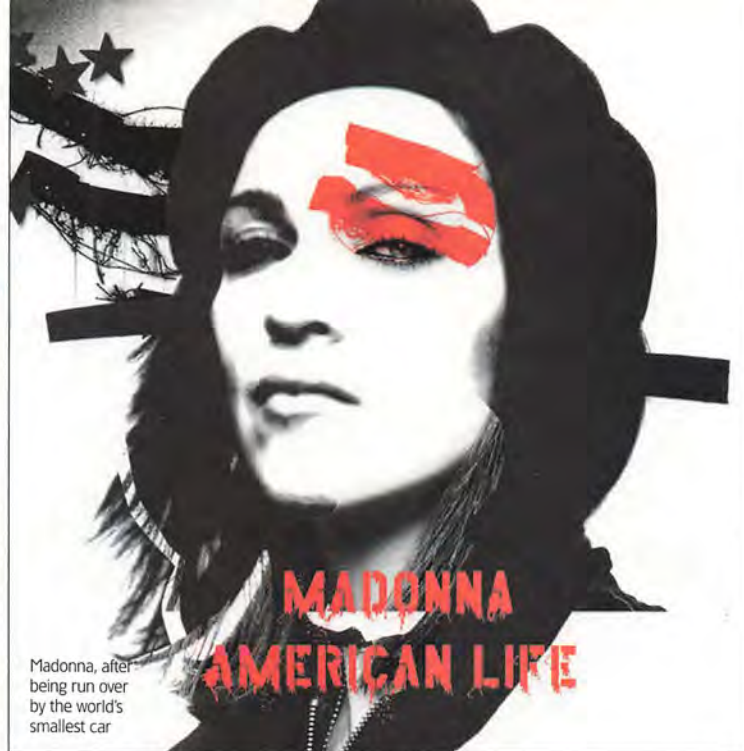
SYSTEM OF A DOWN bassist Shavo Odadjian is seeking damages from a security firm following a show in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While watching coheadliners Slipknot, Odadjian says staff elbowed him in the nose, dragged him through the crowd and threw him out of the venue.

Word!



"Very few people you're hearing on the radio make their money from their own hearts and minds."

GEORGE MICHAEL SHOWS HE'S NOT BITTER AT ALL



Madonna, after being run over by the world's smallest car

Comrade Madonna!

Why is the superstar mother of two dressed as a revolutionary?



★ THE COVER OF Madonna's new album, *American Life*, features the 44-year-old mother of two photographed as

a revolutionary fighter in a black beret, with stars and stripes behind her and a red stamp across her face. The singer says she hopes the imagery "provokes thought and dialogue."

What kind of thought Madonna hopes to provoke, however, remains unclear. She insists that she is neither "anti-Bush" nor "pro-Iraq" but rather "pro-peace."



Citizen Cher (heh) and Patty Hearst

She may have gotten the idea for the cover from an infamous photograph (inset) of publishing heiress Patty Hearst wearing a beret in front of the Symbionese Liberation Army flag after she was kidnapped by the radical group in 1974.

The album cover is also remarkably similar to a print of Cher portraying the Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, which was created

by graphic designer Scott King. Entitled *Cher Guevara*, the print recently won three design prizes in London. **CLARISSA LASKY**

OSAMA MAMA!

What's this? Osama bin Laden's niece wants to be a rock star!



OSAMA BIN LADEN'S niece is trying to be a pop star and plans to release a single this year.

Waffa bin Laden, 26, whose father is the notorious terrorist's brother, is launching a recording career. An American-trained lawyer-turned-London socialite, bin Laden is working with Madonna producer Nellee Hooper. Although the svelte beauty severed ties with her uncle years ago, she fears her surname might hinder her chances at success.

American Idol judge Simon Cowell put it bluntly in England's *Sun* newspaper: "There's only one worse surname you could have to launch a pop career: Hitler." **JONAH WEINER**



Waffa bin Laden: You'll have to check that bag before getting on the flight, miss.

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The Next Big Thing!

LILLIX

These four sexy, Madonna-endorsed Canadians are not the punk Spice Girls... *or are they?*

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

★ TUCKED UP IN the far left-hand corner of Canada is Cranbrook, a remote town in British Columbia. Surrounded by the Canadian Rockies, it's famous for — well, nothing much, really. But just as Avril Lavigne did last year for Napanee, a similarly microscopic Canadian burg, four rocker girls who go by Lillix are about to put their hometown on the map.

"Cranbrook is a beautiful place, full of nature. And we love nature," coos keyboardist-singer Lacey Lee Evin. "But music was our escape — a chance to get out and see the world."

Lillix comprises Evin, 19; her sister, guitarist-singer Tasha Ray Evin (who, at 17, looks like the fully developed love child of Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee); bassist-singer Louise Burns, 17; and 23-year-old drummer Kim Urhahn. Their

debut album, *Falling Uphill*, is a hook-laden mix of Lavigne's sass and Bangles-style effervescence. Madonna's label, Maverick, signed the quartet on the strength of a five-track demo.

"Ohmigod, Madonna is so amazing," Lacey Lee says, beaming. "We met her at Maverick's offices in Los Angeles. We walked in, and there she was, strumming on Tasha's guitar. We sang for her, then sat around talking about school."

It's been a convoluted route from signing with Maverick to the release of *Falling Uphill*. It took more than two years of auditioning producers before Lillix finally clicked with the Matrix — the crew behind Lavigne — as well as Pink songwriter Linda Perry.

Then there's Lillix's image. Their first publicity shots made them look something like a punk Spice Girls, high-heeled and horny.

"Ewww," Lacey Lee groans. "The idea that I may one day end up on some teenage boy's wall looking like that... well," she says, collapsing into giggles, "it's weird, isn't it?" [BLENDER]

>>> **OUT NOW**
FALLING UPHILL MAVERICK



Lillix, from left: Tasha Ray Evin, Louise Burns, Kim Urhahn, Lacey Lee Evin

> A hook-laden mix of Avril Lavigne's sass and Bangles-style effervescence.

ONE-PIECE: JACKET FROM URBAN OUTFITTERS; ON KIM: TOP FROM TRASH & VAUDEVILLE; ON LACEY LEE: DRESS BY KATHY KEMP FOR ANNA

KOOL MIXX

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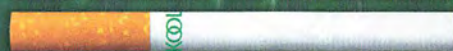


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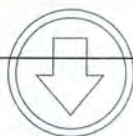
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"Can I take my finger out of the light socket now?"

Do You Rock? ★

Justin Guarini

Does the toothy, tentacle-coifed 24-year-old *American Idol* runner-up... rock?

Best rumor you've heard about yourself?

That I'm getting married to Kelly Clarkson and we're having a million-dollar Texas hoedown-theme wedding. There's no truth to that whatsoever.

What was the strangest thing that happened during one of your gigs as a bar mitzvah singer?

You know that part of a bar mitzvah where the family members are lifted up on chairs? This one old guy had just had surgery, and he left something nasty on the chair.

Could you take Simon Cowell in a fight?

A physical fight? He's a pretty big guy. I think I'd have to hit the gym. He lifts weights. He's been threatened many times. Have I ever wanted to hurt him? No! He's a great guy.

The last time you didn't get to sleep before dawn?

It was in Las Vegas on the *American Idol* tour. We did two shows, and afterward I had to stay up and start packing before we left to go get the next flight out. That's not very rock & roll, is it?

Will you ever record a conceptual double album?

We'll see what's in the cards. Right now, my ambition is to get established making records, because music's my first love. And only then maybe I'll try branching out into other things.

Most expensive item of clothing?

I spent a lot of money on this green corduroy jacket. It looks like it's badly stitched, but I guess it looks really punk.

What's the largest number of people you've woken up next to in a hotel bed?

One. I don't know if I rock, man! STEVE LOWE

VERDICT

HE SAID IT HIMSELF: JUSTIN GUARINI... DOES NOT ROCK!

→ THE *AMERICAN IDOL* FEATURE FILM, FROM JUSTIN TO KELLY, WILL HIT MOVIE THEATERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ON APRIL 25.

News Roundup!

The Chinese government prohibited **THE ROLLING STONES** from playing four "sexually explicit" songs — "Brown Sugar," "Honky Tonk Women," "Beast of Burden" and "Let's Spend the Night Together" — at the band's performances in Shanghai on April 1 and in Beijing on April 4.

One of **CHER's** wigs, worth an estimated \$8,000 to \$10,000, was stolen from her dressing room halfway through a performance at the Coliseum in Richmond, Virginia. A police spokeswoman said: "The wig is half black and half teal and braided."

Computer-aided pop music is the latest subject of **MARIAH CAREY's** disdain. The singer claims CD covers should feature pictures of the studio computers instead of the musicians.

Word!



"You'd think I was a little pansy."

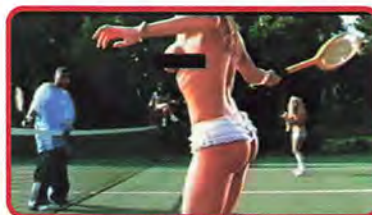
GRAMMY EMPRESS NORAH JONES, ON HOW SHE IS VIEWED BY HER PUBLIC



"It's all in the grip...."

Too Rude for U.S.!

Nelly and Justin Timberlake's flesh-filled video for "Work It" is too hot for America. But guess who has a copy?



★ NELLY AND Justin Timberlake's video for their new single, "Work It," is so sexually explicit, Nelly's record company has decided not to show it in the U.S.

Universal Records has decided that the video is too shocking — or, in the words of a spokesperson, "too funky" — and has banned it in this country.

The explicit clip features the two stars — cast as trouble-making gardeners — frolicking with scores of voluptuous Playmates at the *Playboy* Mansion. Several Playmates pop out of their tops, and two appear nude.

Playboy founder Hugh Hefner makes a brief appearance. "We're in Hef's world, and it's a beautiful thing," Nelly explained.

The video will be broadcast only in Europe. ROB KEMP

★ Pop Star Must-Have



EYEGASSES!

Wanna look brainy without having to do any work? Try these star-endorsed specs!

Gimme your lunch money, 16-eyes!



Eminem



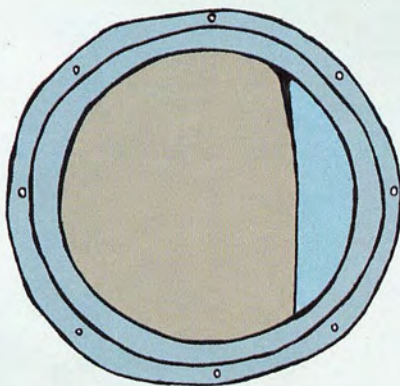
JC Chasez



LL Cool J



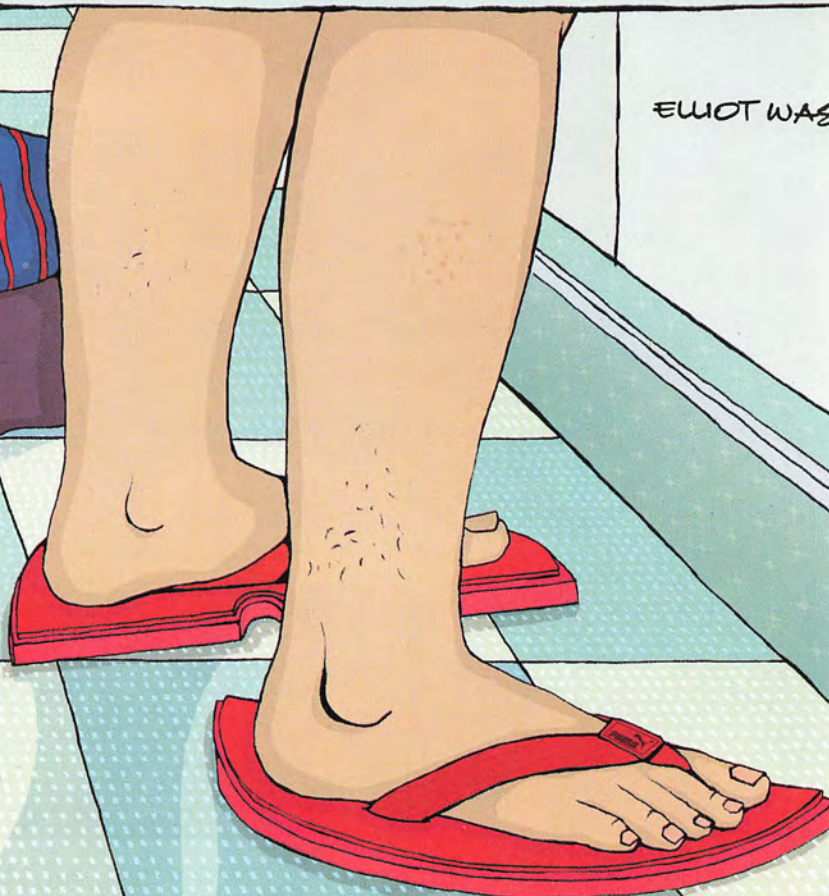
Chester Bennington



DOING ALL HIS LAUNDRY
AT ONCE REQUIRED NUDITY...

ELLIOT WAS COOL WITH THIS.


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The Next Big Thing!

ELECTRIC SIX

Motor City quintet breaks through — with help from the White Stripes' Jack White

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK OCKENFELS 3

★ DETROIT, MID-MORNING, a living room in disarray. Two-fifths of the Motor City's second-most-celebrated garage-rock act, Electric Six, are slumped on a sofa. *Blender*'s host, singer Dick Valentine, resembles an extra from '70s cop show *Starsky and Hutch*. Guitarist Surge Joebot is completely bald. Both are somewhat worse for the wear. The rest of the band — bassist Disco, drummer M and guitarist Rock n' Roll Indian — are, in the words of Valentine, "uh, elsewhere."

Suddenly, Electric Six are a band that matters. They formed as the Wildbunch in 1996, when they were all in their mid-twenties, but their raucous, performance art-oriented rock failed to make commercial inroads for six years. But now, one name change (and one cameo from the White Stripes' Jack White) later, everybody wants a piece of their action.

"Jack White?" Joebot asks. "Who's he?" White, billed as John S. O'Leary, provides guest vocals on Electric Six's explosive single "Danger! High Voltage," but the group refuses to acknowledge his existence, claiming O'Leary is merely a Cleveland-area mechanic and amateur singer. "We can neither confirm nor deny the involvement of anybody called Jack White in our band," Joebot says.

Their debut album, *Fire*, suffuses blood-boiling rock with sleek disco, each song performed with a vigor that sends their excitable fans into a frenzy.

"One of them bit my foot," Valentine says. *Blender* laughs. Bad move. The singer doesn't like this. "What are you laughing at? It wasn't funny!" he shouts. He points to his toe. "It hurt!" [BLENDER]

>>> **OUT THIS MONTH**
FIRE XL/BEGGARS GROUP



Electric Six, from left:
M, Disco, Surge
Jobot, Dick Valentine,
Rock n' Roll Indian



> The band's debut, *Fire*, suffuses blood-boiling rock with sleek disco.

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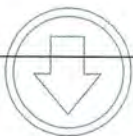
Rank	Vodka	Country
1st	GREY GOOSE® LE CITRON ...Finishes very cleanly with an incandescent wash of ripe lemon flavor.	France
2nd	Stolichnaya Limonaya Vodka	Russia
3rd	Absolut Citron Vodka	Sweden
4th	Tanqueray Sterling Citrus Vodka	England
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"Dude, you're gettin' a Dell"

Getting arrested for possession of child porn

is the new

Getting arrested for possession of heroin

The French, critics of U.S. foreign policy

is the new

The French, inveterate surrender monkeys

Jacko, alleged cow's-blood-bathing voodoo enthusiast

is the new

Jacko, alleged preteen enthusiast



Hiring a body double

is the new

Hiring a hulking, omnipresent bodyguard

Nonsmoking NYC

is the new

NYC, latter-day Sodom and Gomorrah



Britney, alleged foe of hygiene "down there"

is the new

Britney Spears, alleged breast-enhancement fan

New Found Glory's Chad Gilbert, Mr. Kelly Osbourne

is the new

The Used's Bert McCracken, Mr. Kelly Osbourne



News Roundup!

Musically unskilled model **NAOMI CAMPBELL** is threatening to release more music, this time anonymously: "I won't do it under my name," she claims. "Maybe I'll call myself Brown Sugar."

According to British authorities, Who mastermind **PETE TOWNSHEND** may not be prosecuted for his alleged possession of child pornography.

Debbie Mathers says she fears her son **EMINEM** has a drinking problem. "From what I've heard, Marshall has been drinking a lot. Drinking is an escape," she told Fox News Network's Bill O'Reilly.

DIONNE WARWICK, '60s legend and aunt of troubled diva Whitney Houston, has claimed that the marijuana in an empty lipstick container found in her possession at Miami International Airport last year was planted on her.

Word!



"If he called me tonight and said, 'Let's have five more,' I'd do it in a heartbeat."

DEBBIE ROWE, THE MOTHER OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S TWO ELDEST CHILDREN



"Stop in the name of rock!": Elvis "apprehends" Col. Parker.

KILLER?

Was Elvis Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker, a murderer?



★ **ELVIS PRESLEY'S** manager, Colonel Tom Parker, may have killed a young woman in his Dutch homeland and then spent the rest of his life attempting to cover up his crime, an explosive new biography claims.

In the forthcoming *The Colonel: The True Story of Colonel Tom Parker and Elvis Presley*, journalist Alanna Nash alleges that the colonel — born Andreas Cornelius van Kuijk in the Netherlands — bludgeoned a young woman to death in the Dutch city of Breda on May 17, 1929, when he was 19 years old.

He then left his family, illegally fleeing the country and coming to America to lead a double life, which culminated in his 22-year management of Presley's career. Parker always refused to tour outside the United States.

"There's not one smoking gun," says Nash, who spent six years working on the book, "but the more I looked into his life, the more the compass needle pointed to that murder. The way Parker lived his life was as a man who had a terrible secret. I personally think he killed that woman."

Nash also reviewed Parker's previously unseen military records, revealing that he was discharged for being in a "constitutional psychopathic state" following his desertion from the U.S. Army in 1933.

Byron Raphael, an "adopted son" to Parker, and a William Morris agent-in-training who worked for the colonel from 1956 until Presley was drafted in 1958, thinks Nash's murder theory holds water.

"Whether or not Parker murdered that girl, who knows, but there were times that I was scared to death of him," Raphael told *Blender*.

"Parker was afraid of women all the time I knew him. He could have had anyone he wanted, being Elvis's manager, but he didn't want to be touched by them — he always shied away. I thought it was because he was faithful to [his wife] Marie, or that he was afraid of lawsuits. But perhaps he was afraid that some distant rage would come back."

But Todd Slaughter, the president of the Elvis Presley fan club in Britain, is decidedly skeptical.

"I think it's eyewash, quite frankly," he says. "It's a novel story, but it's sensational."

The Colonel hits bookstores in July.



Col. Tom Parker: "Singing to a banana? Elvis'll do it!"

CHUCK MINDENHALL

Clockwise from top left: Murray Photo; Kobal Collection; (2) Glenn A. Baker/Redferns/Retna Ltd.; Gary French (illustration); Lester Cohen/WireImage.com; Jeffrey Mayer/WireImage.com; Oia International/Retna Ltd.; David Dwyer/Retna Ltd.; Star Photo/News.com

Is there an award for winning the most awards?

- > Car and Driver 10Best four years running
- > Four Automobile Magazine All-Star awards*
- > Polk Automotive Loyalty Award**
- > Kiplinger's Best in Class and First in Safety for Cars Under \$16,000[†]
- > AutoWeek America's Best Economy Car and First New Car (2001)
- > AAA Auto Guide Award in the Under \$15,000 category^{††} (2000, 2001, 2002)
- > 2000 North American Car of the Year



focus

the best small car to drive
Automobile Magazine (February 2002)

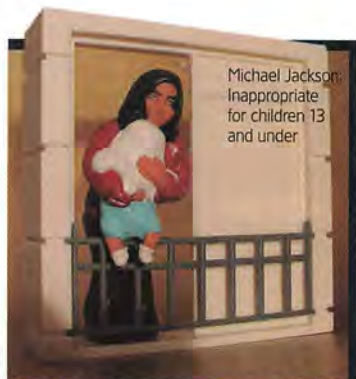


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Michael Jackson: Inappropriate for children 13 and under

MINI-JACKO!

Own a replica of the star's Berlin baby-dangling exploit!

MICHAEL JACKSON'S surreal baby-dangling incident has been immortalized with a six-inch figurine.

Available at popsculptures.com for \$50, the "King of Pop Baby Drop" captures the moment last October when the star held his third child, 9-month-old Prince Michael II (nicknamed "Blanket"), over the seventh-story balcony of a Berlin hotel. The sculpture is the brainchild of Emil Vicale, 40, the Web site's proprietor.

"I was barraged with that image of Jackson dangling his child over the balcony," he says. "I thought it would be perfect for a sculpture." Vicale says he has sold hundreds of the King of Pop Baby Drop figurines. He also offers action figures of President Bush, Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. **ROB KEMP**



Whoa. Check this out.

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK!

Simon & Garfunkel crooner Art and his son look eerily alike, eh?

SINGER ART GARFUNKEL brought his identically coiffed and identically tuxedoed 13-year-old son, James, to the forty-fifth annual Grammy Awards at Madison Square Garden in New York on February 23.

The 61-year-old singer and his former partner, Paul Simon, opened the ceremony with a rendition of their 1966 folk-rock hit "The Sound of Silence." It was the first performance by the frequently feuding pair since 1993. **ROB KEMP**

News Roundup!

A flying sheep's head fractured the skull of a concertgoer at an Oslo performance of Norway's black-metal standard-bearers **MAYHEM**. The fan, Per Kristian Hagen, later said, "My relationship to sheep is a bit ambivalent. I like them, but not when they come flying through the air." He said he's planning legal action against Mayhem, which was cutting apart the sheep onstage.

50 CENT has given his 6-year-old son, Marquise, an unusual present: a tailor-made bulletproof vest.

A lock of hair belonging to the late Beatle **GEORGE HARRISON** was auctioned recently. Its new owner, Spanish hairdresser Rafael Pages, will display it at his hairdressing museum in Barcelona.

MARILYN MANSON has promised his forthcoming concert spectacular will incorporate nudity, child wrestlers and Siamese twins.

Word!

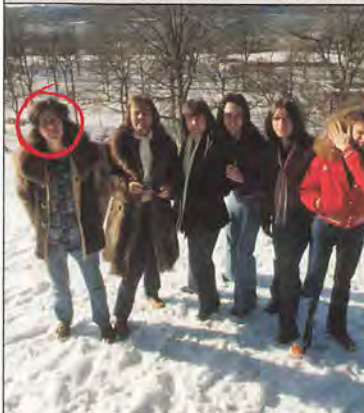


"I've been married twice, and I haven't had a marriage yet."

JENNIFER LOPEZ, ON MATRIMONY

★ Where Are They Now? ★

Life After Rock



Dennis Elliott

of Foreigner

THEN!
Drummer
1975–1992

NOW!
Wood Turner,
Southwest, Florida

★ "BEING IN FOREIGNER was a real blast. We seemed to have everything going our way. We even had a private plane. We could settle in a major city for several days, fly to wherever we were playing and do the show — then get back on the plane and still be 'home' at the hotel by midnight.

"I can't remember how many Top 10 singles, like 'Cold as Ice' and 'Hot Blooded,' we had, but it must be nearly a dozen [*Foreigner* scored nine Top 10 singles; "I Want to Know What Love Is" hit number 1 for two weeks in 1984]. All the albums continue to sell, so the numbers keep changing. By now, we've sold more than 23 million albums.

"I left for a number of reasons, but mainly because [singer] Lou Gramm had left to pursue a solo career. Although we replaced him, it didn't really sound the same onstage when we played. It felt a little dishonest.

"That decision was hard to make. But I gave them lots of notice, and I continued touring as well as training the drummer who

replaced me, so they didn't miss a single show. We parted friends and remain friends to this day. They changed my life.

"Wood turning has been a passion for me for 30 years. It's an art form that requires a lathe, some wood and very sharp handheld tools. The wood is held in the lathe and rotated and shaped using gouges and chisels.

"The only thing wood turning has in common with drumming is that I designed and turned my own drumsticks. I have a design now that I love — I'm considering offering them through my Web site. But they're hand-turned — they won't be cheap.

"It wasn't until a few years ago that anybody in wood turning knew anything of my past. I kept it a total secret, so I can say that whatever I've achieved in the wood-art field is a direct result of my work. I have work in the permanent collection of the National Museum of American Art and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. It's quite an achievement." **AS TOLD TO JON REGARDIE**

"No one in wood turning knew anything of my past."





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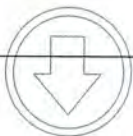
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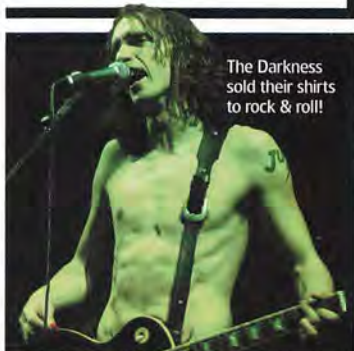
'SUP, WILBUR?

It's the return of the famous Mr. Ed — hip-hop style!

TWENTIETH CENTURY Fox and Original Television are planning to bring back Mr. Ed, a full 36 years after the talking horse last appeared on national television. But the updated equine will ditch Ed's famous country-bumpkin persona and become a hip-hop horse.

The new Mr. Ed will incorporate "old theories with new tones and witty slang," according to a Twentieth Century Fox spokesman — yet the show will still take place in a rural setting.

"No horse has been cast yet," the spokesman added. **CHUCK MINDENHALL**



The Darkness sold their shirts to rock & roll!

METAL RULES!

Freddie Mercury-inspired Brit hopefuls win over Texas rockfest

BRITISH METAL ACT the Darkness was the best band at the seventeenth annual South by Southwest (SXSW) music convention, held in Austin, Texas, in March.

"The point of coming to South by Southwest was to let America know what it was missing," Darkness lead singer Justin Hawkins told *Blender*.

Garage-rock hopefuls dominated, perhaps inspired by the White Stripes and the Strokes, both of whom broke out at the festival two years ago.

More than 1,000 bands played SXSW, and 6,500 delegates attended the festival, 200 more than last year. **ROB KEMP**

News Roundup!

Donatella Versace has announced the new face of her fashion empire: perpetual worst-dressed-list winner **CHRISTINA AGUILERA**. The Italian designer's new line was apparently inspired by the singer's videos.

DMX is the latest hip-hop artist to announce his retirement, saying he'll quit after the release of his forthcoming album, *It's Not a Game*. The rapper pledges to spend more time reading the Bible and playing with his children.

Mötley Crüe's **NIKKI SIXX** is publishing his drug memoirs. Titled *The Heroin Diaries*, the book will detail the downside of substance abuse. "Shitting your pants... is just not glamorous," he explains.

Texan Richard Brown, 23, is facing murder charges after he allegedly killed a man who claimed that Brown looked like 'N Sync's **LANCE BASS**.

Word!



"Is that enough?"

A CONFUSED COURTNEY LOVE ATTEMPTS TO PAY FOR \$42 WORTH OF MAGAZINES WITH A \$20 BILL AT A BEVERLY HILLS NEWSSTAND



Mandy Moore really should invest in some Q-Tips.

★ In the Studio

Mom-Rock!

Cute **Mandy Moore** has ditched the pop in favor of... **Joan Armatrading**. What's going on?

★ "IT FELT LIKE everyone I was working with on my other albums was against me," Mandy Moore says with a sigh.

The surprisingly tall 19-year-old pop star/actress is explaining why, just like her pop peers Justin Timberlake and Christina Aguilera, she's distancing herself from the fluffy, processed bubblegum (such as 2000's hit single "Candy") that made her name. But why?

"I didn't like the songs [from my last album]," she grumbles.

So now she's recording a batch of hit songs first heard before she was born — and giving them the Mandy Moore "treatment."

"The idea was to present these songs in a way my age group can

relate to," she says. She began sessions for *Coverage*, her fourth album, this fall and has recorded versions of "Drop the Pilot," by singer-songwriter Joan Armatrading, and "Whole of the Moon," by folk-rockers the Waterboys.

Unlike the \$10,000-a-day fortresses she's used to, Moore is recording in the Los Angeles garage studio of producer John Fields, who has worked with Andrew W.K., among others.

So is pop-metal Moore's new direction?

"That would be funny," she says, laughing. "Mandy goes metal! I don't think I'd look very good in a dirty white shirt!"

Au contraire! **ROB KEMP**

ALSO IN THE STUDIO



Lenny Kravitz, shocked upon spotting a supermodel he hasn't slept with

EMINEM will spend the year recording in Detroit. He will produce and rap on the second album from side project D12, released this summer, then concentrate on his next solo CD, due in winter 2004....

R&B debutante **ASHANTI** is in New York City's Crackhouse studio crafting *Summertime*, the '80s R&B-tinged follow-up to last year's double-platinum self-titled debut. It's due out on July 1....

◀ An intruder broke into his house, but **LENNY KRAVITZ** is still in his home studio in Miami recording the follow-up to 2001's *Lenny*, scheduled for release this fall....

Folk troubadour **RUFUS WAINWRIGHT** is cutting tracks in Bearsville Studios near Woodstock, New York, for his third album. The as-yet-untitled record will be out later this year....

CAMEL

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BURNER+

Useful Tips From the Stars!

Simple Plan, from left:
Chuck Comeau, Pierre Bouvier,
Sébastien Le Febvre,
Jeff Stinco, David Desrosiers,
plus their new pals

HOW TO...

"HOOK UP" AFTER A ROCK SHOW

WITH

Simple Plan

Montreal's *TRL*-endorsed quintet Simple Plan have indulged in after-show hijinks since their days as adolescent pop-punkers. Here, they show how to score some post-gig tonsil hockey. Beware the dreaded "roadblock"!

BY ANDY KAMENETZKY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

1 GET THE LAY OF THE LAND!

Chuck Comeau, drummer: "Don't bother with the girls sitting in the front row — they're into the music and won't hook up with anybody. You should look for chicks hanging out by the side of the stage, the entrance or near the soundboard. That type of girl is there because she wants to, ahem, 'meet people.'"

2 BE CRAFTY!

David Desrosiers, bassist/singer: "Always take her interests and make them yours. If you start out talking about sex, she'll split. Instead, you should bring up clothes and shopping. She'll eat it up. Most guys aren't comfortable talking about that shit, but then most guys don't get chicks to go into a sex shop, like I do."

3 GET RID OF THE "FRIEND"!

Sébastien Le Febvre, guitarist/singer: "The curse of every hookup is the 'friend' or the 'roadblock.' Only one girl out of 100 will ditch the friend, so you have to hook her up with a dude from the road crew — that's why you have a road crew! If you can't get rid of the friend, you can kiss the hookup goodbye."

4 MAKE YOUR MOVE!

Pierre Bouvier, lead singer: "Never, ever ask to kiss her. Just do it. You might get rejected, but then you have a reason to leave. Be done with the whole thing and take it like a man. Besides, if you try and then she brushes you off, you didn't lose too much time. Get the fuck out of there and go look for someone else."

**SIMPLE PLAN'S DEBUT ALBUM,
→ NO PADS, NO HELMETS...
JUST BALLS (LAVA ATLANTIC)
IS OUT NOW.**

FROM LEFT: ON JESSICA, TOP AND SKIRT BY D&G; SHOES BY ADRIANA CARAS. ON CHUCK, SWEAT SHIRT BY ROLÉ MODELE, SHORTS BY DICKIES, BELT BY PAUL FRANK, SHOES AND SOCKS BY PUPA. ON PIERRE, SHIRT BY ROLÉ MODELE, SHORTS BY DICKIES, SHOES BY PONY. ON SÉBASTIEN, SHIRT BY DIESEL, SHORTS BY FRESH JIVE, SHOES BY PACCARTH, BELT AND Wristband BY FRESH JIVE. ON JEFF, SHIRT BY BEN SHERMAN, JEANS BY DIESEL, SHOES BY PUPA. ON DAVID, T-SHIRT BY DIESEL, SHORTS BY KALANGA, BELT BY FAMOUS STARS AND STRIPES, CLOTH BY DIESEL, SHOES BY CONVERSE. ON ELIZABETH, JACKET AND JEANS BY DIESEL, T-SHIRT AND PUMPS BY MISS SIXTY.

Wardrobe styling: Erika Scott; prop styling: John Milhauser; hair: Bob Tully for Love; makeup: Cherie Corbitt for Love

CAMEL

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with an indulgent
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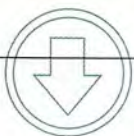
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☆ What's in Your Bag?



Paul Van Dyk pulls on the "cardigan of charisma."

PAUL VAN DYK

At Beat Nonstop, 7262 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles



SILENCER "ROLLIN' N' CONTROLLIN' "

"This is a full-on breakbeat record. It's the bomb! You land on this breakbeat, and that bass line bursts out and everyone says, 'Wow! What the fuck is this?' This is an amazing record!"



VEK "CAN'T GET IT" FILTERHEADZ REMIX

"An amazing remix. They're from Belgium. They're outstanding at featuring this kicking tribal percussion. It's much more interesting than a typical trance beat."



DROPCULTURE FEATURING MICHAEL ANTHONY "COME ALIVE" SKULL VALLEY REMIX

"The 'Come Alive' Skull Valley remix is on Terraform, which is absolutely my favorite house label!"



TECHNASIA "RECREATIONS" REMIX

"Technasia are from Hong Kong. They're what electronic music is all about right now. This is more for my radio show than my gigs, since you can't dance to this beat at all." JON REGARDIE

→ PAUL VAN DYK'S NEW ALBUM, *GLOBAL (MUTE)*, IS OUT NOW.

News Roundup!

Scottish indie heroes **BELLE AND SEBASTIAN** are using producer Trevor Horn for their latest album. Horn is the musical mastermind behind Frankie Goes to Hollywood's "Relax" and, more recently, Russian "lesbians" t.A.T.u.

MICHAEL JACKSON allegedly attended a voodoo ritual in Switzerland in 2000. Reports claim he underwent an initiating "blood bath" and wired \$150,000 to a Malian chief named Baba, who sacrificed 42 cows to curse Jackson's enemies.

P. DIDDY has announced plans to launch a line of alcoholic beverages called, oddly, Diddy.

MADONNA is now also a children's author. *The English Roses* is the first in a five-book deal; it will be published in September. Reports claim it is similar in style to *The Little Prince*. According to U.S. publisher Nicholas Callaway, the series will "combine great storytelling with ravishing art."

Word!



"I'm sick of Bono, and I am Bono."

THE FORMER PAUL HEWSON, ON OVEREXPOSURE

COURTNEY WATCH!



Just another quiet night out for Courtney Love and pals!



"Hi, Courtney here. . . ."



"It's hot in here. . . ."



"So I'll take off all my clothes. . . ."



"And roll around the floor! Yes!"

Love Strips Again!

Courtney Love is at it once more, taking it off in London pubs!

☆ COURTNEY LOVE IS behaving erratically again. Following her naked pre-Christmas romp through London's streets, and a few days after she shed a duck suit she was wearing onstage with Elton John, the star went shopping for underwear and decided she wanted everyone to see her new items.

On February 7, the unpredictable singer — complete with a fresh blue streak in her hair — rounded off her riotous London jaunt by visiting her favorite lingerie chain, the appropriately named Agent Provocateur (founded by Joe Corre, the son of Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren).

Following the shopping trip, Love began drinking at her hotel before embarking on a gig crawl. After seeing the Streets play at the Brixton Academy, she whizzed north of the Thames to a garage-punk night at Camden's tiny Barfly venue.

Though she missed all the bands there, she hooked up with the DJ duo Queens of Noize, who are friends of hers, and started singing loudly, dancing on tables and taking control of the decks. She eventually stripped down to her new lingerie and, following this display, fell onto the floor.

After the club night ended, Love returned to her hotel room with friends, where she continued to show off her new underwear collection into the small hours. She was unavailable for comment. STEVE LOWE



What a princess!

Holds on like a bad relationship.



New Suave for Men holds hair as well as more expensive gels, for a lot less.



Timberlake does what men have wished to do since 1987.

HMMM...

Hey, does Justin Timberlake ♥ Kylie Minogue?

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE'S short visit to Britain in February sent speculation about his love life into overdrive.

Duetting with Kylie Minogue, 34, at the Brit Awards ceremony in London, Timberlake "copped a feel" of her famous backside. "On a scale of 1 to 10, it was, like, a 58," he raved afterward.

But the former 'N Sync star, 22, returned to his hotel that night with Minogue's sister, singer Dannii Minogue. Reports suggested Dannii was a decoy for her sister, who visited Timberlake's room from 4 A.M. until 6 A.M. "Everyone's been working overtime to cover Kylie's tracks," an insider said. *STEVE LOWE*



Techno wizard and underwear salesman Jay-Jay Johanson

IN BRIEFS

The Catholic League blasts a risqué underwear ad

A STEAMY underwear commercial featuring the European dance hit "Automatic Lover," by Swedish electronica artist Jay-Jay Johanson, has been denounced by the Catholic League, a public-morality watchdog group.

Shown exclusively on MTV, the ad for 2(x)ist, a jeans and underwear company, is set in a club and depicts women whispering "2(x)ist" to their male partners, whose clothes vanish, revealing 2(x)ist underwear.

Louis Giovino of the Catholic League said, "Next they won't be wearing anything. Our culture just sinks lower and lower."

Johanson told *Blender* that the Catholic League should lighten up. "An underwear ad can't harm anyone," he said, laughing. *ROB KEMP*



Obits

JOHNNY PAYCHECK

64, February 18, in Nashville, of complications from emphysema and asthma. Country singer of "Take This Job and Shove It" who earned his outlaw stripes in 1985 when he shot a man in an Ohio bar. He served two years in prison for the offense.

OTHAR TURNER

94, February 26, in Gravel Springs, Mississippi, of pneumonia. Standard-bearer of nineteenth-century fife-and-drum music, a precursor of the blues. Turner played a home-made bamboo cane fife and a wooden flute; his music appears in the film *Gangs of New York*.

FRED ROGERS

74, February 27, in Pittsburgh, of cancer. Composer and lyricist of more than 200 songs. The PBS icon held a bachelor's degree in music composition and for more than 30 years filled his TV show, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, with gentle songs for children.

HANK BALLARD

75, March 2, in Los Angeles, of throat cancer. Leader of R&B vocal group the Midnighters and creator of the dance-craze song "The Twist." He wrote, recorded and released the tune as a B-side a year before Chubby Checker's cover became a number 1 smash. Was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990.



Howie Epstein with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, 1983

Howie Epstein 1955–2003

The ex-Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers bassist died of an apparent heroin overdose on February 23 in New Mexico

★ "WE WERE TOGETHER 13 years. I loved him very much," Howie Epstein's ex-girlfriend Carlene Carter recently told *Blender*. "We worked great together; he was a real workaholic."

Epstein, 47, died in a Santa Fe, New Mexico, hospital after passing out in the bathroom of his home in nearby Tesuque. A female companion told hospital staff that he had been taking heroin.

Epstein was dismissed from the Heartbreakers in 2002 as his heroin habit deepened. His low point was recently detailed in *Blender* ("Drugstore Cowgirl," April): In June 2001, he and Carter were arrested after authorities caught them with three grams of black-tar heroin. Carter, Johnny Cash's stepdaughter, told *Blender* that she "tried to take the blame to help Howie keep his job." Carter moved out of Epstein's home shortly after the bust, blaming the increasingly "scary" lifestyle that would lead to his death.

An accomplished singer and bassist, Epstein joined the

Heartbreakers in 1982 and appeared on every album of theirs from 1985's *Southern Accents* to 1999's *Echo*. Last year, he was inducted with the band into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. On his own, he produced folk-rock John Prine's 1991 Grammy-winning album, *The Missing Years*, as well as two albums for Carter.

The Heartbreakers issued a statement that said "The world has lost a great talent and a kind and gentle soul." *WILLIAM SHAW*



Last rites: Epstein plays at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, 2002

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YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

Dave Grohl

He dates the finest women, eats the finest cheeses and drummed in the finest band. Is there anything the Foo Fighters frontman (and Courtney Love nemesis) *hasn't* done? "I haven't met Gallagher yet," he sighs. . . .

BY DAVID KEEPS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS McPHERSON

★ DAVE GROHL IS gnawing on a cheeseburger and sucking down an imported beer. "Grab a Heiney," he offers, moving out of his Los Angeles-based management office to have dessert: tobacco flambé. Except for the recessed white filter on his Parliament, the bearded Foo Fightin' man, 34, looks like he just stepped out of the cab of a big rig, not the silver BMW he drove up in.

Wearing a T-shirt with a mushroom cloud and the words *THAT'S ALL FOLKS* ("Thrifty shop"), Japanese Levi's ("American ones are for frat boys with weird, big asses, and I'm a man with a skinny ass") and blue suede shoes ("Puma Californias"), Grohl is a droll, self-effacing star. The ex-Nirvana drummer recently enjoyed a dream evening at the Grammys, taking home a Best Hard Rock statue for the Foo Fighters' "All My Life" and jamming with Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Costello and No Doubt's Tony Kanal in a rousing tribute to the late Joe Strummer.

Still, Grohl remains a humble servant of rock: "I'm a high-school dropout who was destined to manage a fuckin' Wal-Mart!" he cracks. "Now I can do whatever I want."

As *Blender's* photographer angles to take a parting shot, Grohl breaks into a chimpanzee grin and yells, "Hey, take off the lens cap! C'mon, Ansel Adams, work with me here."

All right, pal, you asked for it. . . .



Dave Grohl returns from the Hell's Angels meeting in disgrace.



Cheese: Now with added holes!

Tell me your favorite joke about rock drummers.

RUBY_2, LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA

Oh, there are so many. I like them when they're cruel, like "Why do drummers leave their drumsticks on the dashboard of the car? So they can park in handicapped spaces."

What's Dave Grohl's secret for success with the ladies?

YKANTUC, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

I'm kinda like Ducky from the John Hughes classic *Pretty in Pink*. I'm that loyal, quirky, funny, eccentric but weird-looking guy. With no sense of fashion.

Of all the John Hughes films, though, *Sixteen Candles* is the crux of my being. The essence of my core. That's my life story. But rather than being Ducky, I'd be Farmer Ted, the geek played by Anthony Michael Hall. I really looked up to Anthony Michael Hall until he got his braces off and started bulking up.

You're an avowed cheese connoisseur. So what's your pleasure — goat, sheep or cow?

FRANKENDUDE, UTICA, NEW YORK

I heart cheese. Cow cheese. I'm not down with goat cheese because a) it's a little too sour for me, and b) the fact that it's called goat cheese — I just imagine sucking a dirty goat's tit. I don't want that in my mouth. Whereas a cow, with those big, supple handlebar nipples, I'll suck the hell out of those.

If I were going to make you a cheese platter, it would include Esrom, a northern European cheese with a bite — it's one of those cheeses that tastes fine, but afterward your hand smells like old pussy. Then Bierkase: delicious, goes well with a nice hefeweizen, which is wheat beer. And finally I'd have to go with Chaumes, a French cheese that tastes like God.

Which line from the Clash's "London Calling" did you most want to sing at the Grammys, and were you able to?

LIBBYZ, FRANKLIN, MICHIGAN

Yes, I got to scream "A nuclear error!" Not nuke-you-lur, like some people from the shallow end of the gene pool might say. I wasn't too sure about the phony Beatlemania thing; I left that to Bruce [Springsteen] and Elvis [Costello]. Standing next to Springsteen freaked me out. It's like meeting Abraham Lincoln without the hat.

How would you feel if I said that the drum fill in "Smells Like Teen Spirit" is your signature contribution to rock & roll history?

KOJACK, BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

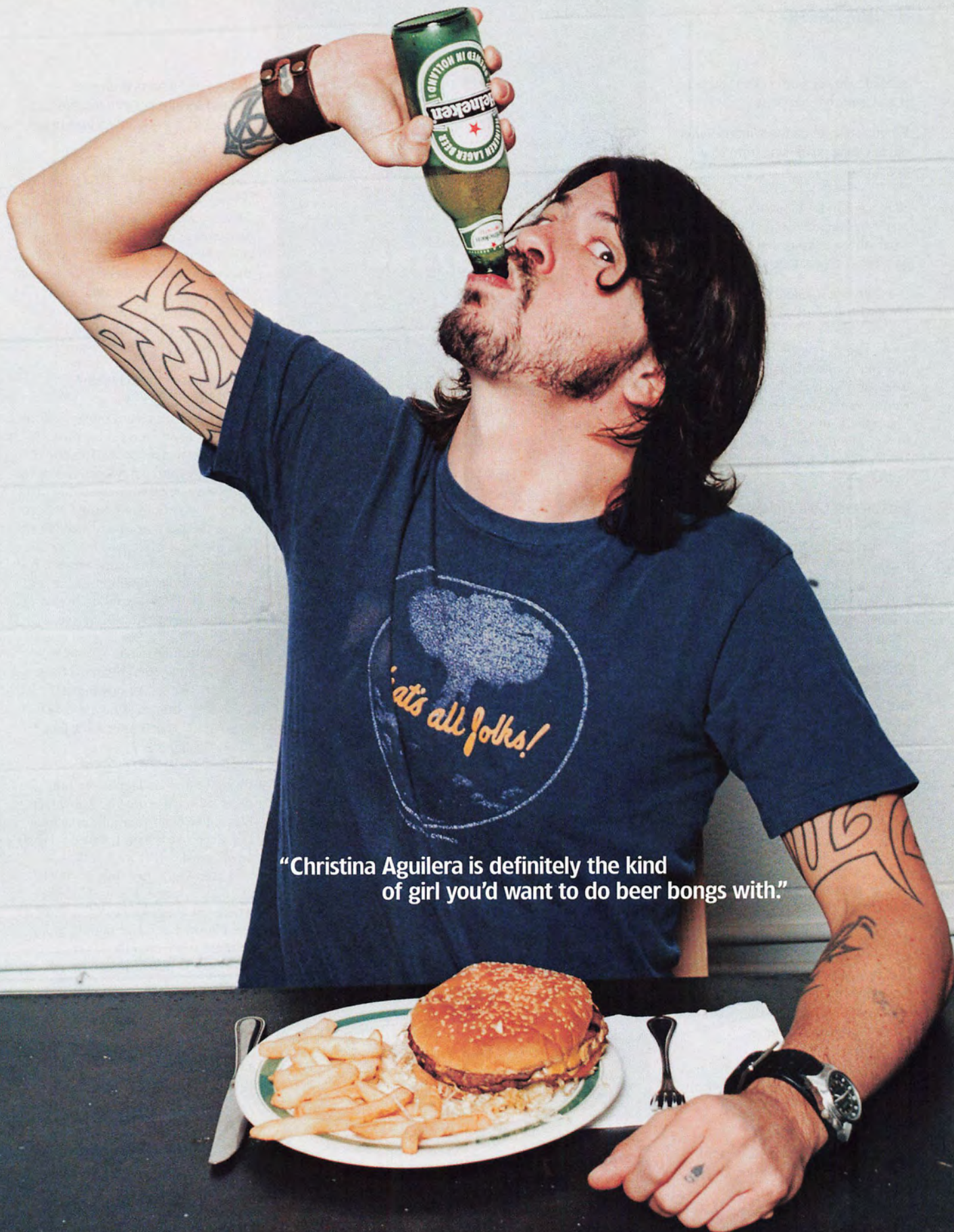
I'd probably have to agree, because I consider myself somewhat of a blandish drummer. I hold down the beat and let everybody else do their thing. I'm not very flashy, but when it's time to do something →

Dear Superstar

Got a question you're desperate to ask a superstar? Let *Blender* be your intermediary. Send your questions to us, and we'll put the smartest to the world's greatest music stars. Neat, huh?

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Mail: Dear Superstar, *Blender*, 1040 6th Avenue, 22nd floor, New York, NY 10018
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"Christina Aguilera is definitely the kind of girl you'd want to do beer bong with."

You'd never guess he was a drummer, would you?

★ DAVE GROHL

special, you lay a little extra sauce on it and see what happens.

When you were dating Winona Ryder, did anything go missing from your apartment?

MOLLYLIPS, RUTLAND, VERMONT

Wait a second. [Adopts a mock corporate-executive voice] I don't know what you're talking about. I didn't date her. I'm a musician.

Did Christina Aguilera really do a beer bong with you last year?

MOJOJOJO, BOSTON

Yeah, and she parties like a champ. I give her props for that, for sure. She's definitely the kind of girl you would want to do beer bongs with. She wasn't "dirty" about it at all — in fact, she finished every last drop. Dude, that's the fucking pullquote right there.

Did you ever have a mullet?

RAJ3000, FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

Of course I did. But I like to refer to it as a "soccer rocker." "Mullet" seems a little derogatory. I was 13 and listened to the Police. Everybody on the soccer team had a haircut like Sting's in 1983.

What was your single greatest moment with Nirvana?

BDRAYBERT, PORTLAND, OREGON

Probably playing the Reading Festival in England in 1992. There had been so many rumors that the band was breaking up, that Kurt [Cobain] was in rehab, that we were self-destructing.

We stepped onstage in front of 60,000 people without rehearsing and played one of the greatest shows that we ever had. It proved that the three of us had a chemistry that went beyond a rehearsal room or a magazine cover.

Do the guys in the Foo Fighters ever make Spinal Tap jokes about your lovely girlfriend, Jordyn Blum, being the band's "documentarian"?

MCDODO, CORAM, NEW YORK

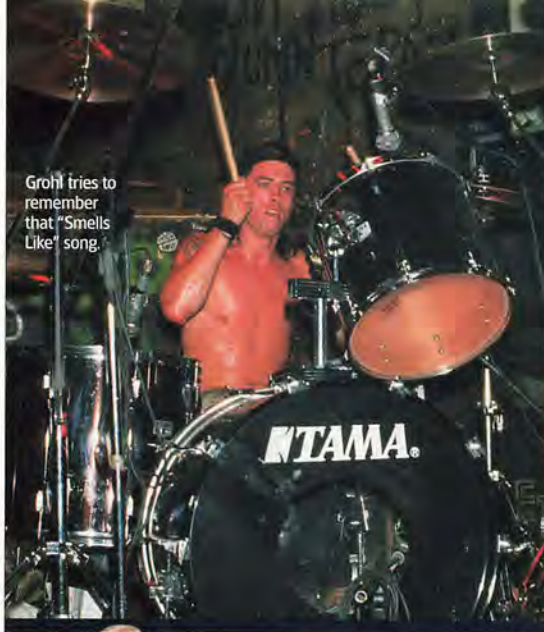
Oh, interesting! [Firmly] No, because if they did, they'd be fired. The iron fist works very well. We're one big, happy family.

Tell me about one unreleased song that's going to be on the upcoming Nirvana box set.

YUGIOH1, TAMPA, FLORIDA

I'd have to say "Beans," which is just Kurt speeding up his voice to sound like a munchkin who's singing "beans, beans, beans" over and over

Grohl tries to remember that "Smells Like" song.



Xtina loses track of her ass.

again into a four-track. It's a hit, man — I can't wait for the video. TRL all the way.

Have you read any parts of Kurt Cobain's Journals?

SIRCHARLES, LAS VEGAS

No, I haven't. It makes me uncomfortable reading a diary written by someone I know. Maybe if it was Divine's diary or Björn Borg's, I might be interested. But the fact that it's someone I know seems a little intrusive.

Do you know what the book says about you? And did you know that Kurt was keeping a journal?

ANDRENYC, NEW YORK

No, but I'm sure it's all great [laughs]. Kurt would write every night before going to sleep, and when we shared a small apartment in Olympia, Washington, in 1990, he would retire to his room and write for hours and hours before turning out his light and going to sleep. I'm sure that he has many journals and diaries that haven't been seen by anyone.



Grohl with girlfriend Jordyn Blum, 2002



Grohl, Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello at 2003 Grammys

When Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins got into trouble with drugs, did you ever think to yourself, "Oh, no . . . "?

SPUNKY, SALT LAKE CITY

" . . . Not again"? [Laughs] It was bad, actually. Taylor's like my brother; he's my best friend in the world. To see another one of your friends go down from taking that shit too far, it makes you want to become a dentist. You want to get as far away from that shit as possible. Now Taylor's totally sober. He went straight into rehab and hasn't done anything since.

Have you ever taken heroin?

WABBIT, ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

I haven't so much as smoked a joint since I was 20, and I'm 34 now. I used to love taking acid. I'm one of the few people I know who has never done coke, speed or heroin. My drug career was over by the time I was 20. It was basically weed and acid. That was fun for a while, but I stopped because it gave me panic attacks. I couldn't smoke a joint and chill out and watch TV; I'd wind up breaking out in hives and calling 911.

You strike me as a likeable, funny dude who must have some hilarious showbiz friends. Who are they? Jack Black? Andy Dick? Gallagher?

RON.STONE, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

I haven't met Gallagher yet, but there's always time. I do know Jack Black. I've been a fan of Tenacious D's since 1997. And I played on their new record.

I met Andy Dick only once. He's got that sideways sense of humor where you don't know if you should feel insulted or take a bath or laugh your ass off. Evidently, his cock is so long that he plays the wristwatch



Nirvana's true love was always accounting.

Clockwise from top: Kristin Callahan/FX; Alphonse Tillymonde (left), Mark Seliger/Corbis Outlines; Frank Nicotola/Getty Images; Jordan Miller/Camera Press/Berni; Steve Grantz/WireImage.com

joke on people: He'll walk up to a stranger and say, "Hey, you wanna see my new watch?" And you'll look down and he's got his cock wrapped all the way around his wrist.

What music was playing when you lost your virginity?

AOKHILARY, SOUTH ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

There was no music. The party was over. She was a junior on the basketball team. I was a freshman, and I never saw her again. She ruled me like a caged animal. It was like 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, just silent until the monolith came crashing down.

What's the most extravagant thing you've ever spent money on?

JOESIXPACK, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

My new home that I've just purchased. It is worthy of an *MTV Cribs* episode. It's fucking dope. It's a big house with a killer view in L.A. — a deluxe hacienda up in the sky, built in the '50s on two and a half acres. I even have tennis courts. I play tennis like I play golf, which is, like, Special Olympics-level.

What's the hardest thing about driving a moped while intoxicated?

BINKYB, SHAKER HEIGHTS, OHIO

Evidently, not getting caught. I was in Australia [in January 2000], having the time of my life on the Gold Coast down there, which is like Daytona Beach.

I rented a moped, and rather than take the bus down to the show, since I'm a do-it-yourself guy, I drove my moped up onstage like Rob Halford from Judas Priest. Afterward, I had a few drinks and was driving to my hotel a mile and a half away, and I stumbled upon a sobriety checkpoint. I thought I'd breeze right through, because I didn't think I was drunk and I was on a moped, which is like a bicycle with baseball cards in the spokes. But I blew over the limit and wound up in the pokey. Now every time I go to Australia I get stopped at immigration and have to tell my ridiculous story.

Were there lawyers present the last time you spoke to Courtney Love?

ANDYSTERN, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

No. We've never been in the same room with lawyers. I think the last

"Atkins diet, my ass!"



Courtney Love, very pleased to meet you!

time was . . . 1998? Things are going fine. We're not in court; we seem to be very happy and doing our own things. It's one of those things where you might bicker back and forth via lawyers, and when you see each other you kind of just giggle. We bumped into each other in an elevator at the Chateau Marmont hotel in Los Angeles, and she invited me to Michael Stipe's room. I went up and said hello.

What's the nicest thing you can say about Courtney?

RALLYHAT, HONOLULU

Um. Well. I guess that she's truly an individual. I've never met anyone like her in my whole life [laughs]. Next question.

What's your favorite possession from childhood that you still have?

SIDDOGG, TULSA, OKLAHOMA

[Whistles] What could that possibly be? Probably my record collection. That's been destroyed, but I still like to look at the covers. I used to think that cleaning your albums with rubbing alcohol was acceptable, seeing as how it's antibacterial. Your records end up looking like Krispy Kremes. Kids, don't clean your records with rubbing alcohol.

If you were a parent, would you let Michael Jackson baby-sit your kids?

BUENO, SAN FRANCISCO

No. I'm still trying to stick up for him. I feel bad for the guy. You hate to see anyone fall apart. Nevertheless, he should keep his fucking hands off my kids. [BLENDER]



The Foo Fighters, from left: Grohl, Taylor Hawkins, Nate Mendel, Chris Shiflett

"Courtney Love is truly an individual."





BLENDER EXPLORES THE FINEST TUNES IN HISTORY

Tumbling Dice

Candid photography proves conclusively that — yes — Mick even does that dance in private.

The Rolling Stones' grooviest song was recorded in the sweaty basement of a French château during the heroin-drenched sessions for *Exile on Main Street*, their best album. But when exactly was it written? Who knows?



"IT'S SO LAID-BACK, it really sucks you in with that groove." That's how Aerosmith's Joe Perry describes "Tumbling Dice" — but for the Rolling Stones, it was one of the most difficult songs they ever attempted to record.

The creative dice first started tumbling in October 1970 at London's Olympic Studios, when the band laid down some early demos, but the song wouldn't be completely finished until March 1972, when the final mix was made in Los Angeles.

Along the way, the Stones retreated from the U.K. to the South of France and tax exile. It was there in July 1971, when the entire band moved into Nellcôte, Keith Richards's rambling old villa in Cap Ferrat, that "Tumbling Dice" really began to take shape.

The mansion "looked like a massive wedding cake," remembers former Stones guitarist Mick Taylor. "There was a lovely patio and ornamental gardens that sloped down to the beach." Unfortunately, the boys had to record in the villa's hastily adapted basement. "They parked the Mobile Studio outside, this huge truck full of the latest recording gear,"

Taylor says, "and ran cables into the basement."

Summer temperatures quickly soared in the poorly ventilated, dank dungeon. "It was 120 degrees," Richards once estimated. "Everyone sat around sweating and playing with their pants off."

"It looked like a prison," Mick Jagger has said. "I like really big

> "It really sucks you in with that groove." AEROSMITH'S JOE PERRY





rooms to record in. The humidity was incredible. I couldn't stand it. As soon as I opened my mouth to sing, my voice was gone. It was so humid that all the guitars were out of tune by the time we got to the end of each number."

As Taylor recalls it, though, "Tumbling Dice" had its genesis back in Britain — and studio logs show that work on the track started before the flight to France. "It started at Olympic," Taylor says. "It was one of those songs with a very simple structure that evolved out of us just jamming. It even had an early vocal with completely different words, and may even have had a different title."

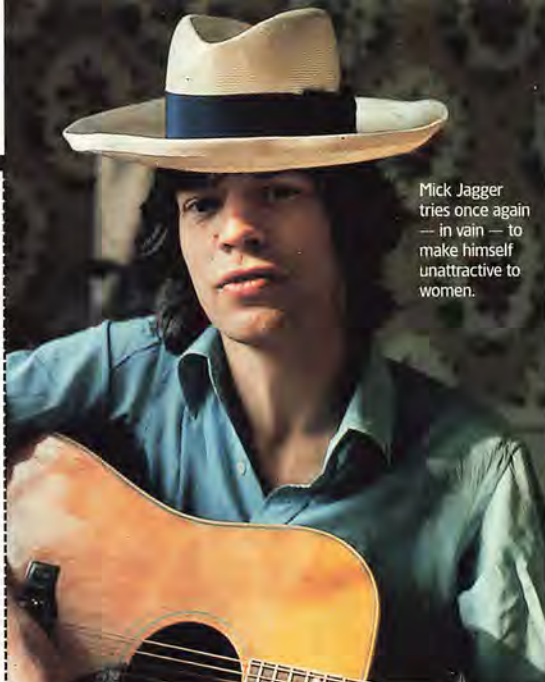
But the song took on new life in the sweltering conditions of the Côte d'Azur. "I remember writing the riff upstairs in the very elegant front room, and we took it downstairs the same evening and cut it," Richards has said. "A lot of times when ideas come that quick, we don't put down lyrics — we do what

we call 'vowel movement.' You just bellow over the top of it to get the right sounds for the track."

Jagger says that the lyrics were "written to fit Keith's riff. It's about gambling and love, an old blues trick. I had a lot of friends at that time who used to fly to Las Vegas for the weekend."

But even after the basic riff, melody and lyric had been thrashed out, the finished track didn't come easily; some have suggested it took as many as 150 takes before Richards was happy with the overall feel. "We worked on that for a couple of weeks at least, just the basic track," says Andy Johns, who engineered the song. "I know we had a hundred reels of tape on the basic track. That was a good song, but it was really like pulling teeth. It just went on and on and on."

Another intriguing aspect of the track is that while original Stones bassist Bill Wyman played on every other classic Stones single,



VITAL STATISTICS

SONG
"Tumbling Dice"

ARTIST
The Rolling Stones

LABEL
Rolling Stones Records

PERFORMERS
Mick Jagger
vocals, guitar
Keith Richards
guitar, vocals
Mick Taylor
guitar, bass
Charlie Watts
drums
Nicky Hopkins
piano
Bobby Keys
saxophone
Jim Price
trumpet
Clydie King and
Vanetta Fields
backing vocals

PRODUCER
Jimmy Miller

ENTERED THE U.S. TOP 40
May 6, 1972

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
7

Mick Taylor filled his shoes on "Tumbling Dice." "Bill was there for the early rehearsals," Taylor notes, "but for some reason, when we came to do the final take, Bill wasn't around, so I stepped in. I met him again just recently and asked if he'd ever minded about that, and he said no, he was perfectly happy with it."

Producer Jimmy Miller oversaw the final mix at Sunset Sounds Studios in Los Angeles in March 1972, and it was released in the U.S. and the U.K. on April 14. It entered the *Billboard* Top 40 on May 6, eventually peaking at number 7.

Though the song has become a perennial live favorite, Jagger has at times seemed disenchanted with "Tumbling Dice." "I don't really know what people like about it," he has said. "I don't think it's our best stuff. I don't think it has good lyrics. But people seem to really like it, so good for them."

Among its hardcore fans was country-rock star Linda Ronstadt. After a Ronstadt concert at the Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles in 1977, Jagger was backstage and suggested that she consider singing more rock-oriented songs. She said she had always loved "Tumbling Dice." Jagger and Ronstadt's mutual artistic appreciation continued, and, rumors had it, escalated into an affair that ended only when Jagger's wife, Bianca, flew to L.A. to sort her man out.

Ronstadt must have felt some satisfaction when her countrified version of "Tumbling Dice" broke into the Top 40 in May 1978, but her affair with Jagger left her with mixed emotions. *JOHNNY BLACK*



WHO'S WHO >>>



MICK JAGGER
Rolling Stones singer now reckoned to be the sexiest grandfather in rock & roll. Granted a knighthood by Her Majesty the Queen in 2002.



KEITH RICHARDS
Elegantly wasted Stones guitarist whose lifelong love-hate relationship with Jagger has fueled some of the band's finest songs.



MICK TAYLOR
Probably the most accomplished guitarist ever to play with the Stones, he replaced the late Brian Jones in 1969 and left in 1974.



ANDY JOHNS
Brother of top producer Glyn Johns. Engineer for *Exile on Main Street*. Later produced Van Halen, Television and many others.



SOLVING YOUR POP CONUNDRUMS SINCE 2001



Dave Davies notices his car's being towed.

Who made the first album with swear words? When it was released?

JESSE CUMMING, CALGARY, ALBERTA

There's been mild swearing in music pretty much forever, but rock's first recorded *f* word was uttered by the Kinks' Dave Davies just before the guitar solo on their 1964 hit "You Really Got Me." It was an unscripted line — Davies's brother, Ray, had given him an encouraging glance, and the moody guitarist had sneered and growled, "Fuck off!" (They used the take. It was a great solo.)

The first lyric featuring the word came a year later, by the underground hippie group the Fugs (themselves named for Norman Mailer's euphemism for the word in his debut novel, *The Naked and the Dead*). On 1965's *The Fugs First Album*, "CIA Man" featured the lyric "Fuckin' A, CIA!"

Why did Jack White of the White Stripes write "The Union Forever" about *Citizen Kane*? Is it his favorite movie or something?

JAY NEILSON, MIDLAND, ONTARIO

Orson Welles's 1941 masterpiece contained a scene featuring a song Jack White loved, apparently called "It Can't Be Love, for There Is No True Love." As White searched in vain for the song and learned its chords on his guitar, he decided to pair the tune with another line from the movie's dialogue. "I had a lot of the lines memorized already," White has said, "and then I went through the film and started writing down things that might rhyme together, that might make sense together."

Performing the song live, White has taken his Kane fascination further, copying a sequence where Welles performs some vaudeville dance steps.

Is it true that the woman's screams you can hear on the Ohio Players' "Love Rollercoaster" is actually someone getting killed?

GLENN HORTON, DAYTON, OHIO

You mean that cleaning woman, getting murdered by an intruder in the studio one room over from where the '70s funksters were busy laying down the song's masters?

No, it's not true. Neither is the tale that the scream came from an aggrieved cover-art model being killed by the band's manager. Drummer Jimmy "Diamond" Williams once explained that the scream was vocalist Billy Beck hitting the high notes. But once a DJ wise-cracked that the noises sounded like



Beck: Everyone's wearing seaweed this season!

I could swear I saw something on the Web about a whole album made up of Beck samples. Is there such a thing?

PAUL MITRA, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

Yes, that album does exist. *Deconstructing Beck's* 13 tracks consist entirely of samples and cut-ups taken (illegally) from Beck tracks. One *Deconstructing* song shuffled 2,500 snippets of Beck's 1996 song "Jackass." The album was

released in 1998 by Illegal Art, a group of hackers led by a Dartmouth grad student who called himself Philo T. Farnsworth (after the inventor of television). Illegal Art pressed 10,000 copies and sold them online for \$5 apiece. Lawyers responded with a cease-and-desist order that never went to court. As for getting a copy for yourself, keep your eye on eBay. Hey, you never know.

someone being killed, the gruesome rumor swept the nation.

"People asked, 'Did you kill this chick in the studio?'" Williams said. "We took a vow of silence. That makes you sell more records." That, plus album covers featuring naked women slathered in honey.



The Ohio Players, shortly before the great 'fro shortage of 1973

Which Neil Young album uses only song titles already used by other artists? I can't figure it out.

KENDRA ROBISON, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Young did have an obsession with writing new songs around old titles, and though he never cut an entire album of them, he did manage to release a few tunes, like "Born to Run," "Goin' Back" and "Little Wing." Composer Tom Slocum (the former husband of Emmylou Harris) once said that he had heard tapes of many more: "There was a Beatles title — I think it was 'We Can Work It Out' — done like a drone. It was like the Rutles, but beyond. The guy has a wonderful sense of humor." Yeah, sounds like a total blast! [BLENDER]

Orson Welles:
"And what's up with
airline food?"



YOUR QUESTIONS >>

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Rock Star Double Date #1

The Couple:
Lena Katina and Julia Volkova,
better known as

★ **t.A.T.u.** ★

The Setting:
Seppi's restaurant,
New York City

The Goal:
To witness firsthand
the secret love language of our
favorite musical couples

"Ha! Really Very Stupid Question!"

Q: What could possibly be more fun than a dinner date with the two outrageous Russian teenage lesbians known as **t.A.T.u.**? A: Swallowing your own vomit, an I.R.S. audit, kidney stones . . .

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MILES LADIN



THINGS TURN SOUR with t.A.T.u., Russia's most famous possibly-lesbian pop stars, almost as soon as they arrive.

But we — *Blender* and *Blender's* intrepid date — don't know this yet. Right now, it is 7 P.M. We are waiting for them in a corner booth of a swank New York restaurant, and — mock us if you will — we are full of naive expectation. Granted, we have heard that t.A.T.u. can be rather temperamental and prone to mood swings and tantrums.

Nevertheless, we are confident that tonight's double date will be a success. Over three courses of fine food and French wine, we will bond, swap jokes and share stories. And by night's end, we will have become firm friends, exchanging phone numbers and e-mail addresses, and promising that we must do this again sometime soon.

How little we know. How foolish our optimism.

Seven twenty-five P.M., and our wine glasses have been drained. We order two more. A quarter of an hour later, the girls finally turn up. They are tiny and look sullen. Lena Katina, 18, starts to say hello, but the second syllable is lost inside a heavy sigh. Her red corkscrew curls bounce around her shoulders and frame a very pretty face — a face that would be prettier if she were smiling. Her partner (in music and, reputedly, in love), Julia Volkova, also 18, flops into the seat beside her, tips her head back and yawns. Her handshake has the consistency of a wet fish in its last moments of life.

Within minutes, Julia begins to fidget. *Blender*, ignoring mounting nerves, attempts to draw her in. The cropped-haired siren blinks languidly, regarding *Blender* with absolute disinterest.



I kind of thought teenage lesbianism would be more fun than this.

Hey, these entrails are really good!



A Russian entourage arrives: management, a producer, a man who doesn't introduce himself and an interpreter for Julia. Menus are provided. Julia wants spaghetti in tomato sauce, while Lena, who never eats after 6 P.M. — "And no," she says, rolling her eyes, "not because I am on diet, but because I don't like to sleep with full belly" — orders only tea. "I want it *now*," she tells the waiter, who, much to Lena's evident disdain, is busy taking someone else's order. "Now!" she shouts.

The waiter blanches: "I heard you." "Well, bring it, then."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

T.A.T.U. ARE THE biggest pop sensation ever to come out of Russia. Their debut

album, *200 KM/H in the Wrong Lane*, features turbo-powered pop songs sung by a pair of chipmunks with helium voices. It has already sold more than a million copies in Europe. And if they have their way, America will soon transform them into proper global superstars.

The girls first met six years ago as members of Neposedi, a children's pop group. In 1999, they auditioned for a teen band conceived by Ivan Shapovalov, a 36-year-old former child psychologist-turned-advertising executive. Shapovalov decided, almost on a whim, to create a girl group whose image relied heavily on illicit sexuality. He found Lena and Julia's natural chemistry intoxicating and created t.A.T.u. (the acronym stands for *ta lyubit tu* — "this one loves that one") around them. They were an instant success.

"In space of two weeks," Lena says, "the whole of Russia know us and love us." It's easy to see why. In a world that perennially celebrates youth and often →



"We should be able to do what we want.
And if you don't like it? Goodbye to you!"

t.A.T.u.'s Lena
Katina helpfully
gives Julia
Volkova a hand
with her "chafing"
boy briefs.

Jim Meehan

fetishizes it, t.a.t.u. are exquisitely manipulative and sublimely marketed.

And then there's their twist — their alleged sexuality. The duo's act revolves around their carnal obsession for each other. Their video for "Simple Motion" features them caressing each other's bare limbs and masturbating — albeit discreetly — in a bathroom. When they appeared on *The Tonight Show* recently, they French-kissed between verses. Jay Leno has never looked quite so pale.

Rumors about whether they're really a couple or, for that matter, genuinely gay only add more fuel to the flames. They are a pop-music fan's wet dream.

As dinner dates, however, they suck.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BY THE TIME the food arrives, almost all lines of communication have thoroughly broken down.

"Such questions," Lena says at one point. "All the time we get the same questions. It's boring. It doesn't matter, you know, whether me and Julia are lovers or friends. We don't care if people believe that we are a couple. This is our private life, and we should be able to do what we want. And if you don't like it? Goodbye to you."

At this point, the woman representing the band's management says something in Russian to Lena — "He wants to know whether you both share a bed" — although we asked no such thing. "Why don't you just tell him?" (*Blender* understands her comments, incidentally, because *Blender's* date is of Russian extraction — something we have sneakily neglected to tell t.a.t.u.)

Julia, her mouth smeared with tomato sauce, responds, repeating over and over, "Nyet! Nyet! Nyet!" She uses her fork as an exclamation point.

"You know what I think?" Lena muses. "I think we should not be doing so many interviews. We should only do the ones that are important or fun."

And this one, presumably, is neither?

Lena smiles sourly, an untouchable Russian princess, and sips her tea.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AFTER A BATHROOM break, we make baby steps toward progress: The discussion around the table concerns travel. t.a.t.u. have visited much of the world in

the last year, and they have many ripe opinions about the places they've been. London, for example, is dull and gray; Madrid fails to impress. As for New York . . .

"I hate New York — I really, really hate it," Lena says. "For me, it is prison. So many buildings. No sky, no nature, no sun. Just buildings, buildings, buildings. It's horrible. Pah."

Julia disagrees. Nature, she says, can be found anywhere in the world, but New York is one of a kind.

"Well, I don't agree," Lena says, pouting.

Do you fail to agree often?

"No, because I don't like to argue," Lena offers obliquely.

Julia contradicts her: "Yes, of course we argue from time to time. I have my opinions, and I don't like to be bossed around."

"I do not agree with this point," Lena says, confusing everyone at the table. "I have my own point of view on every topic." Then, apropos of nothing, she says

this: "You know, I'm studying psychology. It is interesting to watch people. Meeting people, especially famous people, is fun,

because famous people are crazy. What is wrong with them?"

Which famous people are we talking about here?

"No," comes the response. "I am not going to say. Really, such questions you ask." Clearly bored, she turns to her entourage. They loudly discuss, in Russian, whether they'll be able to score free designer clothes from any of New York's fashion houses.



I wonder what Rosie O'Donnell is doing this evening.

I am so going to steal that teapot.

Blender, close to tears now, attempts to politely interject. Fails, tries again. A question is thrown out: *What do Russians think of you?*

Suddenly, Lena looks quite animated.

"Russia loves us!" she exclaims. "They love us because what we have done for the country."

Well, asks *Blender*, unaware that these will be the words that finally break the camel's back, do you like the songs that you've been given to sing?

A strange sound spills out of Lena's mouth, halfway between a derisive laugh and a dry retch. "Ha! Stupid question! Really very stupid question!" Her eyes narrow; she looks quite terrifying. "Do you think we would sing the songs if we didn't like them? What's wrong with you, hey? So stupid."

And that's it. Lena's had enough — she's leaving and taking Julia with her, flouncing through the dimly lit restaurant like the flamboyant, fabulous little diva she is. Our dinner date, in tatters, has been a disaster. In t.a.t.u.'s wake comes only silence, and relief. [*BLENDER*]

"You know what? I think we should not be doing so many interviews."

★

Double Date Report Card

Manners	F
Conversational Skills	D
With Blender	A
With each other	D-
Interest in Our Lives (Lena's only question to Blender: "Are you stupid?")	C-
Sense of Humor	C
Public Displays of Affection	C
Overall Grade	D



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In Your Face!

Wake up, America! Right-wing punching bag Marilyn Manson has returned with a crazed new album, a racy new girlfriend and a first-rate taxidermy collection. But can he still scare the bejesus out of grownups like he used to? "Are you an idiot?" Manson snaps. "I'm the *first* Eminem!"

BY DORIAN LYNSKEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANKIN

IF THERE IS ONE rock star you can count on to own a 150-year-old, seven-foot-tall human skeleton with the skull of an antelope, it's Marilyn Manson. Once the property of occultist Aleister Crowley's lodge, the

bones now sprawl in a chair at the entrance to Manson's attic. "I refer to him as Ernie," Manson says. "I don't know why." Lily, Manson's white cat, likes to curl up in Ernie's rib cage and go to sleep.

Manson is showing *Blender* his helter-skelter, five-story house in the Hollywood Hills with the brisk efficiency of a Ripley's Believe It or Not tour guide. His voice is low and soft, and his face, apart from the occasional flicker of amusement, is as still as a mask. He gently suggests that we restrict our tour to the upper floors, because his girlfriend of three years, burlesque dancer and pinup Dita Von Teese, is entertaining a friend below.

Manson's home, a white, Spanish-style building previously owned by early-Hollywood actress Mary Astor, bulges with religious iconography and haunting artwork, including his own watercolor of JonBenet Ramsey. On the dining-room table sits a Ouija board — a gift, Manson says with mild embarrassment, from Johnny Depp. Entering the living room, *Blender* almost steps on a bearskin rug with the head (and gaping jaws) attached. Manson likes animals, especially the dead kind. There's a baboon by the chaise longue, a raven over the mantelpiece and, draped over an armchair, a deeply unsettling jacket made from the skins of conjoined twin lambs.

"When I was a kid my dog died, so I guess I wanted to get pets that were permanent," Manson explains matter-of-factly. "I have a lovely cat now, but if



Marilyn Manson, shortly before failing his army medical exam

is disconcerting for about five minutes — after which Manson just seems like a polite, funny host with eccentric tastes.

Unless he's been hiding all his Pottery Barn purchases, Manson lives exactly as you hope he would. Maybe this is why it annoys him when people assume he has two identities: the ghoulish folk-devil Marilyn Manson on-camera and plain old Brian Warner at home.

"The minute anybody says to me, 'I don't like you for Marilyn Manson; I like you for who you are,' then that person is absolutely wrong, because that's who I am," he says. "Being Marilyn Manson is what I do — just as much as making a record is. That's why people create parodies of me or take shots at me or sue me. It's because that's what I am."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

she dies before I do, I'll probably have her stuffed."

Manson is dressed in what he calls his bad-schoolboy look: white shirt, black trousers, black thick-soled boots, a black tie almost as wide as his waist and a gray army cap, tilted at a jaunty angle. As usual, his face is painted white and his lips dark red. His trademark contact lens stares blankly from his left eye. All of this

"Shock was never my goal. It's too juvenile. *Anyone* can be shocking."

PEOPLE DON'T HATE Marilyn Manson like they used to. Religious groups and moralizing politicians joined forces against him as soon as he released his breakthrough second album, 1996's *Antichrist Superstar*. Then, after the epochal events of April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, it seemed as if most of America hated him. Two years later, when he played his first show in Colorado after the shootings, he received so many death threats that a squad of undercover police officers had to follow him around all day.

That same afternoon, though, he recorded an interview for Michael Moore's documentary *Bowling for* →



Manson looks
out for agents
of conformity,
split ends



ARE YOU AN ANTICHRIST SUPERSTAR?

Ever wondered if you're a shrewd image manipulator and a provocateur par excellence? Take our quiz and find out!

1 When you're in town, do your fans . . .
 a) Gather at the arena in a throng of sieg-heiling, black-clad teenage alienation?
 b) Gather at Black Mass in anticipation of the end of the world?
 c) Stage protests outside the office of your record company?

2 Musically, do you . . .
 a) Reflect the influences of grinding '90s industrial noise and '70s glam-rock?
 b) Have all the best tunes?
 c) Wish you were still working with Quincy Jones?

3 Is your significant other . . .
 a) A stripper who rides around in her own limousine accompanied by two women dressed as French maids?
 b) Anything that strikes your fancy: human, beast or demon?
 c) Entering junior high school?

4 Are you also known as . . .
 a) Brian?
 b) Beelzebub?
 c) The King of Pop?

5 When you look in the mirror, do you see . . .
 a) An artfully constructed horror-mask face that reflects the appeal of sex and terror in the modern world?
 b) A pair of horns?
 c) The need for a little additional work around the nose?

IF YOU ANSWERED . . .

MOSTLY A): Congratulations — you are an Antichrist Superstar! Good luck with the new CD!

MOSTLY B): Sorry. You are merely the Antichrist. Good luck with Armageddon!

MOSTLY C): Oops! You're Michael Jackson. Leave the building quietly, and there won't be any trouble. ADAM HIGGINBOTHAM



Columbine, which has since been nominated for an Oscar. His smart, articulate performance won him many admirers and finally laid to rest the absurd notion that a rock star could be held responsible for the Columbine shootings. Even so, Manson is ambivalent about the response.

"What I said in the film, I've said since the beginning of the band," he says. "People say, 'Wow, I'm so surprised how well-spoken you are.' It's like me saying, 'Wow, I'm so surprised that you don't smell like dog shit.'"

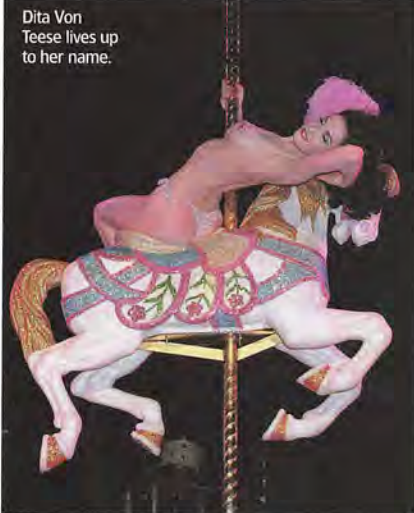
So much for the public's hate. A more pressing question might be whether people love Marilyn Manson the way they used to. His last two albums, 1998's *Mechanical Animals* and 2000's *Holy Wood (In the Shadow of the Valley of Death)*, both sold disappointingly. At the same time, Eminem, another notorious MM, became the moral majority's new nemesis. Manson's bogeyman stock plummeted. The *Onion* ran a mock newspaper story headlined MARILYN MANSON NOW GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR TRYING TO SHOCK PEOPLE.

At age 34, Manson is seen less as an evil pied piper leading the kids of America into Babylon and more as a well-respected commentator and polymath. He exhibited some of his watercolors in a Hollywood gallery this past September and can be seen playing a transvestite alongside Macaulay Culkin in the upcoming movie *Party Monster*. He also has plans to write and direct his own feature-length debut. Where does all that leave his music?

"I like kids; kids like me. I would love to have a kid one day."



Dita Von Teese lives up to her name.



Manson will have an answer for this question — later. First, he wants to play *Blender* his new record, *The Golden Age of Grotesque*. "We'll listen to it and you'll say it's shit, and I'll send my baboons after you," he says, pressing play.

Even by Manson's standards, *Golden Age* is a thrillingly over-the-top piece of work. Influenced by the excess of 1930s vaudeville and the decadence of Weimar Germany, it is frantic with Manson's libertine ideas about entertainment, ego, sex and violence. It's also dementedly catchy, and the language hyperventilates alongside the music. One song is called "Doll-Dagga Buzz-Buzz Ziggety-Zag." The video for another, "mOBSCENE," Manson says, will feature a troupe of dancing girls and an elephant.

While the album plays, Manson interjects with track-by-track explanations, sips absinthe and scribbles on a pad. When it's finished, he turns the pad around to reveal a sketch of *Blender* looking like an extra from *Schindler's List* and clutching a grinning mouth in one hand. "I thought you were very serious, but then you started smiling," he explains.

Manson plays games, but he doesn't really twist the knife. If he was cruel in the past — and various accounts suggest he had his moments — he seems to have softened. He can be shamelessly pretentious, too, but he's charming enough to get away with it.

"Shock was never my goal," he explains. "It's too juvenile. *Anyone* can be



"Ooh, my hemorrhoids!" Manson at Ozzfest, 2001

The voice of reason: Manson stars in Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine*.



shocking. But to be provocative, yes. To be controversial, yes. There's a point behind it."

Did you see the story in the Onion?

"Yes. I'm amused by it, but it's as cheap a shot as blaming me for violence. Someone was stupid enough to ask me, 'So, you're acting now — do you consider yourself the next Eminem?' Are you an idiot? I'm the *first* Eminem."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FOUR YEARS AGO Marilyn Manson locked himself away in a room for three months and wrote a novel that nobody, not even Manson himself, has read since.

"It's a very traditional orphic tragedy, like *Romeo and Juliet*," he says. "The main character was inspired by a girl in my life, and the ending isn't a happy one — the ending *wasn't* a happy one."

Manson never calls the girl in question — actress Rose McGowan — by her name, just as he refers to Dita Von Teese only as "my girlfriend." He's not explicit about what happened with McGowan, but it sounds messy: "Let's just say that I was a rock star, and that's not what she was interested in."

Manson first saw Von Teese at a vintage-clothing exhibition in 1997, but they didn't properly meet until three years later. There wasn't much time between the two relationships. "I wouldn't say I traded in one for the other, because it wouldn't be an even trade, but I made a strong stance in my life," he says.

You're a serial monogamist, aren't you?

"I'm a very codependent person. I guess I was a mama's boy."

There have been other changes in Manson's life. Six months into the recording of the new album, his good friend and longtime bassist, Twiggy Ramirez, left the band. Manson replaced him with Tim Skold, from industrial veterans KMFDM.

"With no disrespect to Twiggy, [his departure] helped the record, because it freed us from a lot of things I felt tied down to," Manson offers. "You have to understand that it's my vision, and the people in the band aren't agreeing because they're in the band; they're sharing the vision. People will say it won't be the same with this lineup. It's not meant to be the same. It's meant to be better."

While talk of his former bandmate gets him down, he visibly brightens when he's talking about Von Teese: discussing how at red-carpet events she looks more like a Hollywood star than the Hollywood stars do; how she'll always give him an honest opinion; and, yes, how she was *Playboy's* cover girl last December.

"I grew up stealing my grandfather's *Playboy* magazines, so to have my

"Just one more filling, Mr. Manson, and then you can have a lollipop."



"I'm a very codependent person. I guess I was a mama's boy."



girlfriend in *Playboy* is nothing to be ashamed of. I don't let my dad look at it, but I'm sure he does anyway."

The longer *Blender* talks to Manson, the warmer and more frank he becomes. He appears content with the people around him. He takes fewer drugs: "I don't always answer the phone when they call," he says with a faint chuckle. He even talks about having children. "I like kids; kids like me. I'm like a clown to them. I would love to have a kid one day."

He won't be a family man quite yet, though. He still has grand designs. He still wants to change the world. And, of

course, he still wants to entertain.

"I'm a shy person," he says. "I don't like being around people, but I don't like being alone — so the way I found to deal with it was by entertaining people. And entertaining people sometimes is also pissing them off. It gives them something to complain about, and it creates new jobs and new committees and new collection plates to pass around to help stop terrible things like me."

On our way out, Manson shows *Blender* his hat rack. There's a Charlie Chaplin bowler, a Russian hat and a Nazi officer's cap (minus the swastika). He picks up a fedora.

"This used to be my incognito hat," he says. "I left a movie theater once and a large group of fat girls yelled, 'It's Michael Jackson!'" His mouth crinkles in amusement. "That's the strangest thing I've ever been called." [BLENDER]



Blender, by Manson

PACK YOUR BAGS! IT'S THE ...

20

MOST ROCK & ROLL TOWNS

Blender sampled the drinks at 112 bars, browsed the used vinyl at 81 record stores, mooched more drinks at 95 clubs and stomachached 47 late-night burritos (*burp*). But it was all to bring you the definitive guide to the 20 most rock & roll towns in America. Now will someone please call a doctor!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRAHAM MACINDOE



➤ The rockiest parking lot in the United States, from left: Williamsburg's Shabin Motta and Zach Seconda (Ex-Models); Tim Harrington and Syd Butler (Les Savy Fave); Debbie Atlas and Daphne Gomez (Avenue D); Paul Banks, Daniel Kessler and Sam Fogarino (Interpol)

IN THE U.S.A.!



WILLIAMSBURG, NY

A low-rent playground of electroclash, cocktails and hot clubs. It's the rock & roll capital of America!

#1
TOWN IN
THE U.S.A.

ONSTAGE AT CLUB LUX, a platinum-blond transsexual in a shiny red dress is flaunting his breasts. A mob of underfed, overcoiffed twentysomethings cheer him on, raise their mixed drinks and dance to cheap-synth disco. Their garish outfits suggest that Devo's closets have been raided. This is the Saturday-night headquarters of electroclash — the '80s pop-culture revival that combines punk attitude with cocaine excess. And it calls this Brooklyn neighborhood home.

"Music is crucial to the Williamsburg lifestyle," says a clerk at Earwax, a record store where the current bestsellers are Coldplay, glammy cabaret troupe Fischerspooner and metal duo Lightning Bolt. "But electroclash is more than the music. It started in the clubs here, and it has spawned a whole culture."

On Bedford Avenue, a former Polish and Puerto Rican strip, expensive boutiques rival thrift stores, and juice bars flank bodegas. A decade ago, an artists' community threw parties in industrial-flavored digs rented for a fraction of Manhattan prices. Today, Williamsburg — where two-bedrooms are the price of dingy Manhattan studios — has sprouted rock clubs like Northsix and Warsaw. Hipsters have taken over the jukeboxes.

Williamsburg boasts so many clubs — and so few adults — that it's easy to forget you're just across the river from the heart of New York City. "It's great that we're only a train stop from Manhattan, but you don't need to leave the neighborhood to have fun," says Cindy Wheeler, co-owner of secondhand clothing store Beacon's Closet. On an average night, you can attend a gallery opening, enjoy a rock show with a side of potato-and-cheese pierogis at Warsaw and finish with a 3 A.M. slice of pizza — all within a five-minute walk. It's the hottest spot around, but ask the cooler-than-thou denizens, and they'll let you know what *they* think. As local hairdresser Siobhan Benson says with a grin, "Williamsburg is soooo five years ago."



Avenue D: No implants here.

ESSENTIAL WILLIAMSBURG >>>>

POPULATION About 160,000 in the district of Williamsburg and neighboring Greenpoint

DRINK AT Enid's (560 Manhattan), which boasts vintage video games and the occasional indie-rock-star bartender; at Club Luxx (256 Grand), hopelessly tacky decorations abound. They're a perfect fit for the intentionally tacky clientele.

WHEN TO VISIT Low on greenery and shade, Williamsburg bakes during summer heat waves, but that's when stoops and outdoor cafes come alive.

HOW TO TALK LIKE A NATIVE Softly. Ears of the local elite are ready to

detect the slightest faux pas — should you slip up (say, by referring to the neighborhood as "Billyburg"), expect a smirk and rolled eyes as your punishment.

TRANSPORT The L train is a quick ride into Manhattan, while the G is less reliable. For a trip to the grocery, take your low-rider BMX bike.

EAT AT Bliss (191 Bedford), where the most popular order is the Bliss Bowl, "a macrobiotic dish of brown rice, steamed vegetables and a choice of tofu or tempeh," according to Summer, the chef.

HOW TO DRESS LIKE A NATIVE Trashy chic. "Hot items for girls are acid-washed jean skirts and slouchy leather boots," says Wheeler of Beacon's Closet (88 North 11th). "Boys buy '70s-style shirts and Members Only jackets."

RANDOM FACT Williamsburg has the highest concentration of garbage transfer stations and noxious facilities in New York City.



"I'm outta here! The bass player just cut one!"

Thanks to Nurbbox. The pages: Tim Suter (2)



Gore Gore Girls:
Bassist curse them.

★ HAMTRAMCK, MI

Blood-sweat-and-beers Detroit for working-class heroes

SURROUNDED ON four sides by Detroit, city-within-a-city Hamtramck (pronounced Ham-tram-ick) was originally a Polish-American community, but immigration from every corner of the planet has created a melting pot of almost 50 different ethnicities. Throw in a smattering of artists and writers — Hamtramck, though hip, is still cheap — mix with plenty of alcohol, and you've got the makings of a classic bohemian scene — equal parts "My Hometown" and "Welcome to the Jungle."

"When I think of Hamtramck, I think of bars," says Brian Smith, the music editor of Detroit's *Metro Times*, and bars are where the town's social life unfolds. The hands-down favorite for live music is Small's. The former "old-guys-drinkin' bar," according to local guitar hero Ricky Phillips, has been spruced up for shows with a stage and a solid sound system. A close second is Paycheck's Lounge, where you can see up-and-coming Hamtramck rockers work on their licks. Hamtramck rock isn't about getting rich and famous; it's about dancing and drinking away that long week at the axle plant. "Blues bands can make a living here," Smith says, "but these other guys work day jobs."

Kid Rock likes to hang out here, and two of the guys in the '80s power-pop combo the Romantics were from Hamtramck. But this is a town where local loyalty trumps star power, making neighborhood heroes out of punksters the Piranhas and the Clone Defects, soul-rockers Electric Six and Bootsy X, and the Lovemasters, "a sort of Iggy Pop-meets-James Brown thing," Smith says.

Without a doubt, though, the most representative Hamtramck band is the Polish Muslims, who rework classic rock tunes polka-style, as when they change the lyrics of "Yesterday" to "Paczki Day." In the end, it's all fast music made for drinking and dancing. In Hamtramck, they understand that if you've got the right attitude, even polka is rock & roll.

ESSENTIAL HAMTRAMCK >>>>

POPULATION About 23,000
ETHNIC MAKEUP "The most multicultural city in the state of Michigan," according to Walter Wasacz of the *Hamtramck Citizen*, a local paper. The mix includes immigrants from Albania, Bosnia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Ukraine and Yemen.
BEST PLACE TO SEE A GUY PASSED OUT AT THE BAR Norwalk Bar (Holbrook and Joseph Campau). "People get off work on Friday, go cash their checks at the bar and drink all weekend," Smith says.
EAT AT For authentic Polish food, go to Under the Eagle (9000 Joseph Campau). Try the cabbage soup and mushroom blintzes.



Try not to think of penises. Just try.

RECORD STORE Record Graveyard (11303 Joseph Campau). "We sell records," says owner Jeffrey Garbus. "No CDs. No tapes."
CULTURAL SIGHTS The Kowalski Sausage Company sign, a neon sausage on a fork (Holbrook Avenue between Joseph Campau and Interstate 75)
WHEN TO GO Paczki Day (the day before Lent). A paczki (pronounced *poanck-key*) is a Polish jelly doughnut, and on Paczki Day, according to Phillips, "people stand in line from about 3 in the morning to buy a bunch of paczkis, and then all day long they stand in the street and listen to music, pig out and get tanked."

★ SILVER LAKE, CA

Move in next door to Beck in Los Angeles's hipsters paradise

IF IT'S CLOSING time, the Tamale Guy is there — seeming to appear simultaneously at every bar and club in Silver Lake. His cooler of fresh homemade tamales is ambrosia to hipsters across this neighborhood on the East Side of Los Angeles.

"Everybody in town knows the Tamale Guy," says Brian Canning, guitarist-vocalist for local psych-popsters Irving. "His tamales are the best," adds Blake Miller, frontman of Moving Units. "He always shows up right when everyone's drunk and starving."

Silver Lake has exploded since pioneers the Beastie Boys — who recorded *Paul's Boutique* here — and Beck first put it on the map in the early '90s.

Thanks to a massive population of vital local bands ("In the hundreds," Canning claims), Silver Lake now challenges Williamsburg for most cooler-than-thou music scene. But what most distinguishes Silver Lake bands is how different they are from one another — from Moving Units' post-punk groove and the Movies' gangly rebel yell to Whiskey Biscuits' country twang. "There's such wide variety — everyone has their own influences," Canning says.

Silver Lake's music has solid community support. There's the Ship, a musicians' collective whose inexpensive recording studio is >>



BEST FOR: GOING TO WORK HUNG OVER

AUSTIN, TX

★ COUNT AUSTIN AS perhaps the only town in the world where people look forward to waking up with a hangover. The reason: the cheap Mexican breakfasts. For *migas* (eggs and fried tortillas slathered in cheese), hit Dario's or Juan in a Million on the east side. For breakfast tacos, it's Taco Express in South Austin or Tamale House #3 on Airport — where, says local lowlife connoisseur Reverend James Bryant, "You're likely to spot a friend who brought home an even worse skank last night than you did!"



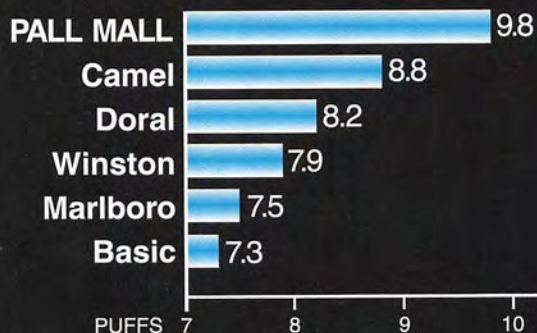
Guy one: "So I said..."
Guy two: "Shhhhh!"

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Lights Menthol Kings, 12 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine; Lights Kings, 12 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine; Filter Kings, 16 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. The amount of tar and nicotine you get from this product varies depending on how you smoke it. There is no such thing as a safe cigarette. For more information, visit www.bw.com

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20 Most Rock & Roll Towns

[Silver Lake continued]

«now frequented by alt-rock celebs the Breeders and Elliott Smith. And there's Spaceland, the cozy 300-capacity club on Silver Lake Boulevard, which has long been the center of the scene. The club awards month-long residencies on Monday nights to local acts like Moving Units to help them build a following. "By

the third show of our residency, there was a line around the block to get in," Miller says, beaming.

Indeed, everything seems to be changing in Silver Lake — even the Tamale Guy's fast-food supremacy. "Now there's this dude who sets up a Chicago-style kielbasa grill outside shows," Canning says. "He's got lines around the block!"

ESSENTIAL SILVER LAKE >>>>

POPULATION About 104,000
NEIGHBORS Indie-rock kids and Hispanic families, graying hippies, artists, Armenian merchants and the occasional confused pimp who has

strayed off Sunset. "There's a lot of conflict," Miller says, "which is good because it makes people react, politically and artistically."

BEST STREET CORNER Sunset Junction, where Sunset Boulevard and other Silver Lake streets flow into one another. Every summer, these streets are closed for a weekend-long celebration featuring national bands like Sonic Youth and Mudhoney alongside local heroes.

LIVE ON Silver Lake Boulevard — walking distance to Spaceland. One-bedroom: \$1,200. Guest-house studio: \$800.

FAMOUS LOCALS Beck, the Afghan Whigs' Greg Dulli, the

Red Hot Chili Peppers' Flea
RECORD STORE Sea Level (1716 West Sunset), specializing in local indie CDs and in-store live appearances. "They have free Pac-Man," Canning says.
DRINK AT The Short Stop (1455 West Sunset), a former cop sports bar co-owned by Dulli. Or the Roost (3100 Los Feliz), a Silver Lake dive extraordinaire. "You can get loaded for pocket change there," Miller notes.

EAT AT Millie's (3524 West Sunset), offering innovative (and inexpensive) variations on comfort food.

RANDOM FACT Despite its edgy reputation, Silver Lake still gets its share of celebs. So, yes, that is Kiefer Sutherland starring as the guest bartender at 4100 Bar (4100 West Sunset).



Soon, Giant Bob would return to get his umbrella.

★ OAKLAND, CA

Laid-back in the Bay Area hip-hop hothouse

ON A SOGGY NIGHT in Oakland recently, 200 people crammed into the Black Box Theater to see *BeatBox: A Raparetta*. The story, rapped completely in verse, pitted rival gangs against one another in breakdance and beatbox battles. It was innovative, thought-provoking and massively fun — a microcosm of the hip-hop scene in the Bay Area.

Oakland is the place to experience grass-roots hip-hop in its purest form. "There are more than 1,000 rap groups making records in the area," estimates Davey D, the host of the popular *Hard Knock Radio* show on KPFA 94.1 FM. Many of these groups sell their home-pressed CDs out of the back of their cars — what they call "dirt hustlin'." Head out to Telegraph Avenue, up near Berkeley, and snag an underground CD for \$5.

Or chat with local legend Boots Riley, who cruises the streets in his truck playing locally recorded music and talking politics.

Like their hippie predecessors, people in Oakland refuse to conform. (This is the town that produced the Black Panthers.) Hang around popular spots like sushi restaurant Yoshi's, and you'll see no bling-bling but lots of dreads and knit skullcaps. The most popular T-shirt features a quote from Gandhi.

And while popular local acts such as Zion I and Z-Trip will never be on MTV, they have

tremendous followings.

"Right now, Z-Trip is outselling 50 Cent at our store," says Bruce O'Leary of Amoeba Records, a mecca for West Coast DJs.

Check out old-school R&B at Sweet Jimmy's or march alongside the "rap-tivists" at a rally. Or turn on any of the six radio stations in the area that play hip-hop. "On any given day at any hour, you'll find at least three hip-hop shows happening at the same time," Davey D says. "You probably can't say that for any other place on Earth."

ESSENTIAL OAKLAND >>>>

POPULATION About 399,000
NEIGHBORS A "Moby" — a bald man who wears tight sweaters and listens to electronica; a dreadlocked poli-sci grad student from Berkeley wearing a knit cap and earth tones.
CATCH LIVE MUSIC AT The Black Box (1928 Telegraph); Yoshi's (910 Embarcadero West)
LIVE IN The Lake Merritt area, on the Grand Avenue side. One-bedroom apartments go for \$1,100 — far less than those in tony San Francisco. "It's cheap, it's safe, it's near everything," says resident Michael Carmody.
TUNE IN TO KHEL, KPFA, KTOO, KUSF, KZSU, KALX. "All of these radio stations play

hip-hop in some form," Davey D says.
HOW TO TALK LIKE A NATIVE Cabbage = money; cake = cocaine; cuddle bang = pineapple juice, gin, Bacardi, lime and Tanqueray
SNEAKER OF CHOICE Nike's Air Force Ones (leather edition)

BEST CORNER College and Lawton in the Rockridge area. Sit on the patio at Pasta

Pomodoro and nibble on corkscrew pasta. "It's the best place in Oakland for people watching," says manager Adam Rochon.

RANDOM FACT Oakland claims to have originated these phrases: *It's all good, playa hata, fahizzle my nizzle, fasheezzy my neezy.*



"Excuse me... which way to the Black Box?"



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Zakopane:
neither Moe nor
Homer pictured

6 WICKER PARK, IL

Chicago's oddball enclave of metropolitan groovers, rock stars and senior citizens

THIS HIP ENCLAVE of Chicago is best summed up by the decidedly unhip dive bar Zakopane, where twentysomethings set up DJ equipment every couple of weeks and overwhelm the handful of elderly Polish customers at the bar with a party that draws 100 ecstatically dancing youths. Zwan, the new band fronted by one of Chicago's best-known rock alums, erstwhile Smashing Pumpkin Billy Corgan, recently threw an after-show party there. Zakopane's owner eventually kicked everyone out because too many people were on the dance floor and too few were lining up at the bar.

It's not that Zakopane is a favorite Wicker Park hangout — far from it. Most people meet at the Rainbo, where you're likely to spy the drummer for local post-rock outfit Tortoise — a famous Wicker Park export — serving drinks, or another band taking a break from recording in the well-known studio, Soma, situated next door. "Some people even refer to it as 'Cheers,'" explains scenester Scott Comeau. But the informal dance party suggests how the neighborhood's tight-knit bohemian clique, subject to rising rents and pricey new sushi bars, is

expanding into still-cheap areas like the Ukrainian Village and Logan Square. To the dismay of many, there's now a Starbucks at the same intersection where MTV's also controversial *Real World* house was.

There are advantages to the Park reaching critical mass, aside from the venues, record stores, boutiques and bars where everybody knows your name. The dense music scene here counts among its ranks up-and-coming, stylistically divergent bands like Joan of Arc, 90 Day Men, Boas and recent transplants Milemarker.

"The only two social circles in the neighborhood revolve around the ages of 25 and 85," says J.R. Nelson, writer for local zine *Hit It or Quit It*, summing up Wicker Park's oddball appeal. "And it's not always so easy to tell these two groups apart, because the thrift-store shoppers and Social Security set dress exactly the same."

ESSENTIAL WICKER PARK >>>>

POPULATION About 76,000
NEIGHBORS Elderly Eastern Europeans who enjoy strong drinks, and the twentysomethings who love to ruin their nights with loud music and awkward dancing.

BEST JUKEBOX Gold Star (1755 West Division) stocks its 'box with everything from defunct Chicago

"supergroup" Rapeman to ZZ Top and Hank Williams.

NATIVES Tortoise, Liz Phair, Veruca Salt, Steve Albini, Billy

Corgan and Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder have both owned houses on Wicker Park itself.

MONTHLY RENT One-bedrooms can cost as little as \$300 and as much as \$1,500.

WHERE TO LIVE Damen Avenue, where fine architecture abounds

and almost every Wicker Park attraction is within a short walk.

EAT AT Leo's Luncheon (1809 West Division), a classic greasy-

spoon where a hearty breakfast can be had for just \$3.50.

BEST BOWLING ALLEY Fireside Bowl (2648 West Fullerton), where you can roll some balls on Monday afternoon and see a rock show later that night.

BEST RECORD STORE Reckless Records (1532 North Milwaukee) is "the best indie-rock used-CD and record store in all of Chicago," according to Sam Axelrod, singer-guitarist for rock band the Narrator.

RANDOM FACT Weekend Records & Soap (1919 West Division) sells both dance records and — yes! — homemade soap. "I was making soap, and I wanted to sell it," says co-owner Bridgette Wilson.



Weekend
Records:
Often more
crowded

★ COACHELLA VALLEY, CA

Army bases, meth labs — and miles of desert. Rock on!

HEAT, ISOLATION AND speed. That sums up Coachella Valley — the unlikely California desert oasis that has spawned a handful of hard-rockin' eccentrics, most notably Queens of the Stone Age. "It's like a deserted island — you're forced to keep yourself interested," says Queens mastermind Josh Homme.

Sparsely populated, Coachella encompasses the high desert area of Joshua Tree and the more civilized lower desert of Palm Desert and Palm Springs, and the population is appropriately diverse. On the main drag in Joshua Tree, you'll find a hippie coffeehouse like the Beatnik Café and a Circle K, separated by a lot of wide-open spaces — there's more parking than people. The lack of anything to do here makes it a hothouse for weirdness. "The

only things out here are cactuses and tumbleweeds, and the intense heat will drive you insane — that speaks a lot about the people who live here," says Jesse "The Devil" Hughes, frontman for the Eagles of Death Metal, Coachella's next-big-thing band. "There's a cavalier element to desert people. You have

to be a pioneer just in order to survive."

"You can play music, bowl, start a fire, drink or fuck — and no one's around to stop you," Homme notes. "We should probably include doing drugs in that list, too."

These desert denizens are known for making their own fun. In the mid-'90s, local

BEST FOR: ALL-NIGHT CRUNK

★ BUCKHEAD, GA

★ BUCKHEAD'S APACHE CAFÉ may be the place for MC battles, and the Clermont Lounge the home of a stripper named Blondie who crushes empty Budweiser cans between her breasts. But if you want to get to the heart of the Dirty South, go to Club 112 — made famous by the video for Jermaine Dupri's "Welcome to Atlanta." "It's off the hook," says local A&R rep Kenton Clayton. "It's a staple of Atlanta nightlife because it stays open until 7 in the morning."



Wait — let me
guess — are we
in Indian Wells?





Queens of the Stone Age: ankle-deep in "rocks"

band Fatso Jetson began the Coachella Valley tradition of "generator parties": bands setting up in the middle of the desert, powering their equipment with portable generators. Seekers of all stripes have long been lured by the scorched beauty of the Valley.

"It's a weird place," attests Alain Johannes, of the group Eleven. "You have meth labs working right next to army bases." Indeed, Coachella is one of Southern California's centers of crystal methamphetamine, referred to by locals as the "white lord."

Hughes says that this helps explain the way that the local music sounds. "The devil is in it," he says, ominously. "The white lord is a vicious beast: He keeps you awake — and suddenly you're possessed."

ESSENTIAL COACHELLA VALLEY >>>>



Stating the obvious, surely

POPULATION 200,000
TYPICAL NEIGHBORS White, Latino and black in nearly equal proportions. "We just hang with the freaks, who cross all races and cultures," Hughes says.
WHERE TO LIVE What streets? Forty thousand bucks will get you a couple of acres; \$200 will rent you a room in a dump.

BEST BAR The Red Barn (73290 U.S. Highway 111) in Palm Desert. Hughes says it's where "the sleaziest and the worst fester together and drink. You walk in, and it immediately stinks. But they have \$3 rum-and-Cokes that are basically all rum."

NUMBER OF LOCAL BANDS Approximately 15: "It's not an armada of rock," says Homme. "It's a Ramada of rock."

FAMOUS NATIVES Queens of the Stone Age, Masters of Reality, Bob Hope

EAT AT The Country Kitchen (61768 29 Palms Highway) in Joshua Tree. "It's one single-wide trailer, and seats only 11 people — the kitchen takes up more than half its space," Homme says.

BIGGEST ANNUAL EVENT Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival — an April bash that has featured such acts as the Beastie Boys and the Red Hot Chili Peppers getting their freak on in the desert.

9 PORTLAND, OR

A national magnet for musical omnivores — who love the rain

A TYPICAL WEDNESDAY night at the Blackbird. A rowdy audience waits in the small, red-walled Portland club for Interpol to come on. It's noisy and chaotic. But once the band begins, everyone shuts up. A hush fills the room. It's like you're at the symphony.

"The audiences are the best I've ever found," says guitarist Timothy Wendel, of the local folk-punk outfit Shicky Gnarowitz and the Transparent Wings of Joy. "A lot of clubs you play, people drink and talk over the band. But in Portland the audiences really listen."

"Portland is an audience's dream," explains local music fan Jeff Hardison. "It's like a bizarro Wal-Mart. Everything you could ever want, but none of it's too commercial. And everyone listens to everything. Your plumber might be taking in the new Cat Power album. Your lawyer collects cat records."

Portland is a city of pioneers and internal immigrants — artists retreating from more expensive cities, Midwestern misfits and southern-fried hippies. Throw them all together, and you get a funky urban population that's unusually receptive to a wide range of musical genres.

Downtown you'll find them at Satyricon, Oregon's oldest punk-rock hole in the wall, which booked Pearl Jam, Nirvana and Faith No More long before their rise to fame. (Courtney Love used to hang out here back when she was a stripper.) On the other side of the river, the Blackbird features local acts like the Standard and Jackie-O Motherfucker. The electronica set chills out at Ohm.

If there's any drawback to Portland, it's the long, wet winters that last from November to April. But then again, the terrible weather just gives you one more excuse to head inside a club and catch a show.



Stumptown Coffee Shop: Steamy!

BEST FOR: FINDING SPAZ T-SHIRTS

COLUMBUS, OH

MAGNOLIA THUNDERPUSSY, near Ohio State University, is a 33-year-old Columbus institution founded by a bunch of Midwestern hippies. "Apparently, they came up with the name after taking lots of acid," says store clerk Carlos Dub. At the back of the store, you'll find a rack of rock T-shirts like no other. Between shirts for the Strokes and the Ramones are ones for the Locusts, G.G. Allin, a San Diego band that calls itself Holy Molar and Spaz — they're a Japanese hardcore band, evidently.

Magnolia Thunderpussy: Shirts!

ESSENTIAL PORTLAND >>>>

POPULATION About 550,000

NEIGHBORS Fifty-year-old Green Party parents who named all three of their children after seasons. Chain-smoking vegans who work for a nonprofit and have a trust fund.

WHERE TO LIVE Hawthorne Boulevard, on the southeast side of town. Home to innumerable bars, shops, movie theaters and clubs. A one-bedroom goes for \$650 a month.

FOR COFFEE Stumptown Coffee Shop (4525 Southeast Division; 3356 Southeast Belmont)

DRINK AT The Basement Pub (1028 Southeast 12th).

EAT AT The Paradox Café (3439 Southeast Belmont). A vegan restaurant even carnivores love.

TRANSPORT The public bus, the TriMet. The perfect place to be when you're hammered and can't find your way home.

DRESS LIKE A NATIVE Don't carry an umbrella when it rains; true Portlanders never do. "It's kind of a Portland tradition," explains Michele Kaeder, of the group Red Venus Love Army.

RANDOM FACT Portland has more strip clubs per capita than any other city in the country.



Portland's oldest punk pub, Satyricon, hosts Portland's oldest punks.



Locals take part in this year's Sitting On Your Ass competition.



Apocalypse Tattoo: A great place for a tattoo... or an apocalypse!

11 CAPITOL HILL, WA

An intimate and densely populated mecca of fun

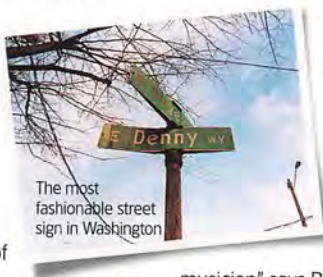
ONCE A MONTH at Double Trouble, a small vintage clothing store in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, they push the jacket and T-shirt racks into the back room and let the bands in. Folks cram into the tiny space, craning their necks to see dark neo-New Wave groups like the A Frames sing songs about surveillance.

When you think Capitol Hill, think hipsters. Lots of hipsters. "Young hipsters, gay hipsters, straight hipsters, hippie spare-changing hipsters..." jokes Jennifer Maerz, the music editor of the Capitol Hill-based weekly *The Stranger*. The Hill is a diverse and densely populated mecca of hipsterdom where black-clad neopunks brush against pink-haired club kids in line for the same latte, if not the same record.

Since this is still Seattle, indie and punk are the sounds of choice, and the live-music venue

of the moment is Graceland (109 Eastlake Avenue East), a gritty hard-rock den. It's full of tattooed, spiked belt-wearing denizens. Also close by is the kitschy, Asian-themed Chop Suey (1325 East Madison), where the ultra-trendy groove to underground hip-hop and a bit of Britpop — proving that although Seattle's music scene may not have the deafening buzz of the Kurt Cobain years, it offers a lot more diverse sounds these days.

Musicians flock to bars like the Cha Cha Lounge (506 East Pine) to compare notes. "Almost everybody who works here is a musician," says Barry Smith, a bartender at the Cha Cha. "Artists feel like this is their place." Though Capitol Hill is in a big city, it has a distinct community feel. "It's all word-of-mouth and very intimate," Double Trouble's Lorenzo says.



The most fashionable street sign in Washington

ESSENTIAL CAPITOL HILL >>>>

POPULATION About 46,000
NEIGHBORS Rock & rollers, artists, gay couples. One in seven Hill residents is gay.

WHERE TO LIVE Pine between Bellevue and Broadway. Average rent is approximately \$800 for a one-bedroom. "It's got everything from vintage clothing and furniture to boutiques, cafes, bars, clubs and performing-arts spaces," says Ann Donovan, Capitol Hill's former community council president.

BEST STREET CORNER "Denny and Olive," Maerz says. "Stand there long enough and you'll see the drunk kids stumbling home from a show at Graceland."

GET A TATTOO AT Apocalypse Tattoo (1558 East Olive)
BEST RECORD STORE Sonic Boom Records (514 15th Avenue East). "People will come in here and buy one Ladytron and one Johnny Cash record," says Matt Olsen, store buyer for Sonic Boom. "That music sounds totally different, but the same people buy it, or at least here they do."

WHERE TO DRINK Comet Tavern (922 East Pike), a dive where dollar bills are stuck to the ceiling and Johnny Rotten look-alikes shoot pool and guzzle cheap beer.
DRESS LIKE A NATIVE Buy vintage gear, preferably in black. Tattoos are always good, and wallet chains are even better.

RANDOM FACT The most important place to get your record played is on KEXP, with morning DJ John Richards. "You can pretty much guarantee if your band is on his Top 10, people will come out of the woodwork acting like your best friend," says Heather Carter, the calendar editor for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.



BEST TO: SAY NO TO THE MAN

DAVIS SQUARE, MA

★ THE COZY BOSTON suburb Somerville prides itself on its counterculture. Students hunt for cheap housing and cheaper beers, but the rootsy, bohemian vibe in Davis Square is much more Berkeley '68 than *Animal House*. George H.W. Bush recently spoke at nearby Tufts University: "The whole square was packed with protesters," says Paige McBee, a cashier at the Diesel Cafe. Franchises get a similarly frosty welcome: There's no Gap, and according to Goodwill thrift-store manager Wayne Viens, "Walk by the McDonald's and it's always empty. Meanwhile, there's, like, 10 coffee shops thriving."



13 LOUISVILLE, KY

Smokers, drinkers and alt-country: Welcome to Kentucky!

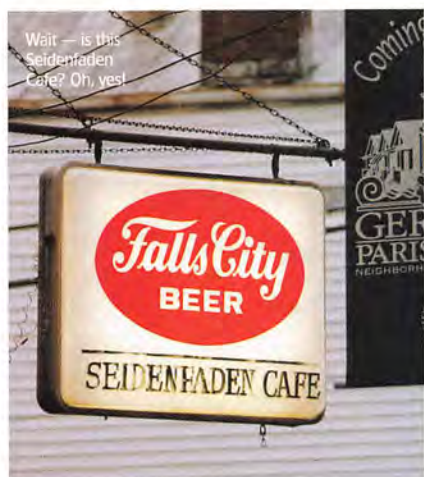
HARD LIVERS ENTER paradise when they get to Louisville. Tobacco is the state leaf, marijuana is its largest cash crop, and Kentuckians like their Maker's Mark bourbon. This is, after all, the birthplace of the celebrated hedonistic journalist Hunter S. Thompson. "You can't throw a rock in any direction without hitting a bar or liquor store," says Bob Nastanovich, Pavement's former multi-instrumentalist and a 10-year resident of Louisville who owns thoroughbred racehorses.

Although a blotto-friendly lifestyle is perennial in "the Ville," youth culture comes and goes. "After five years with not much going on here, it's come around again," Nastanovich says. "There's a vibrant band scene, you can live cheaply and you have all the time in the world. It's definitely a good town for reprobates."

Once a hotbed of hardcore punk and indie-rock, Louisville has swung heavily toward alt-country, says Randy Bolton, a manager at landmark record superstore Ear X-Tacy: "Bands here are now into blues and country records from the '20s and '30s."



Underground Sounds: Actually on the first floor



Alt-country faves like Second Story Man and Digby play in the ratty venues on and around Bardstown Road. This two-mile stretch of restaurants, thrift stores, guitar stores and bars spans the Highlands neighborhood, which boasts beautiful turn-of-the-century homes.

Nationally known natives Palace, My Morning Jacket and VHS or Beta hold triumphant homecoming gigs at Headliners. Three blocks east of Bardstown, behind the Cave Hill Cemetery, the venue is the signal tour stop for acts like Mogwai and Hank Williams III.

Louisville abuts the Midwest but has Southern traits. It's a sore point. Students, alt-rock scene lifers and East End preppies share one thing: No one wants to be seen as a redneck. But Nastanovich notes that Louisville offers "a heaping helping of Southern-ness. People are sensitive about their accents, but visitors are charmed. That's what they talk about as they pack their trunk full of booze, cigs and weed."

ESSENTIAL LOUISVILLE >>>>

POPULATION About 700,000 (It's the sixteenth-largest city in the U.S.)

NEIGHBORS The retired Ford Plant autoworker who reeks of Marlboro cigarettes; the slumming East End princess who depends on that monthly check from Mom and Dad.

WHERE TO LIVE One- to three-room apartments can be rented for \$400 to \$450 along Storey Avenue in Germantown, directly east of downtown.

BEST RECORD STORE Ear X-Tacy (1534 Bardstown). Bumper stickers from this superstore have been spotted all around the world. Also try Underground Sounds (2003 Highland).

DRINK AT Red Lounge (2106 Frankfort); Magnolia Bar (1398 South 2nd); The Back Door (Mid-City Mall, 1250 Bardstown); Freddie's (220 West Broadway); Seidenfaden Cafe (1134 East Breckinridge). Drink either Maker's Mark bourbon or Falls City Beer — or leave town immediately.

EAT AT Lynn's Paradise Cafe (984 Barrett). "Everyone loves the walnut-crusted chicken," according to manager Kristin Phillips.

SHOP AT Fashionistas patronize Unique Thrift Store (1617 Carter).

TALK LIKE A NATIVE: Never, ever say "Lou-EE-ville." It has to be "Lou-UH-vull!"

Mmm... more booze.



PROVIDENCE, RI

A town rebuilt by local music. And its corrupt (but swingin') mayor

LONGTIME MAYOR Vincent "Buddy" Cianci — currently sitting in a federal prison after being convicted last spring of racketeering — turned Providence from a crumbling pit stop on the way to Boston into a pretty and sophisticated home for the arts. If it weren't for him, residents wouldn't be able to tour downtown by gondola, get tax exemptions for renting an art studio or go ice skating down the block from City Hall. But the city's '90s renaissance also owes much to the grassroots youth culture centered around the music scene.

Local faves like Lightning Bolt, Forcefield, and Vincebus Eruptum often play the half-dozen or so vibrantly dingy venues in Olneyville, a seedy industrial area near downtown where old, virtually abandoned brick buildings abound. It's also home to bohos who eschew the rat race. "I'm book-rich and money-poor," says Atlas Bower Books owner Edward Ainsworth. "But I can feed my two dogs, so I'm happy."

Bands that have been heard of outside of Rhode Island usually play venues in the architecturally rich downtown proper, like the large but homey Lupo's. And then there's AS220 — a combination club, cafe, artists' colony, gallery and community center that will give just about anyone with instruments a chance. Olneyville's punk bohemians, Brown University's brains, RISD's artsy types and the East Side's liberal yuppies all converge here.

If you're thinking about moving here, load up the U-Haul and come soon — developers are snatching up properties in Olneyville to turn raw, cheap lofts into pricey condos. "The scene is in a very tenuous place right now," says AS220's artistic director, Umberto Crenca. "I'm not sure which way this will swing. The most important thing is to keep the doors open — wide."



Unsurprisingly, this is a String Cheese Incident concert.

ESSENTIAL PROVIDENCE >>>>

POPULATION About 175,000

FAMOUS NATIVES Arab on Radar, the Farrelly Brothers, James Woods, Jim Brown

NEIGHBORS In Olneyville, a Latino family living below the poverty line shares its block with a cooperative of young bohemians who put on shows and display their art.

BEST STREET CORNER Olneyville Square, where five main roads converge. Every underground venue is within walking distance of this central location. "It's a deserted section of town, with wide-open spaces that allow for various costumed shenanigans and amplifier hijinks," says Ben McOsker, the owner of Load Records.

EAT AT Haven Bros. Diner (off Dorrance Street by City Hall, in an unnamed alley). This train car serves sloppy burgers and grilled cheese to club kids and bikers.

BEST RECORD STORE Armageddon Shop (436 Broadway) for noise, punk, metal and local bands. "Freaks usually come in here," says Anne Barnett, who runs the shop with her husband.

TRANSPORT Modified bicycle. Banana seats standard.



BEST TO: PLAY HACKY SACK

BOULDER, CO

★ IT WILL ALWAYS be the Summer of Love in Boulder, the jam-band capital of America. Punk and hip-hop may have made inroads, but flower power still drives the music scene in this college town, thanks to bands like String Cheese Incident, the local Phish-esque noodlers who have developed a rabid national cult, following. "String Cheese is by far the biggest band to come out of Boulder," says Don Strasberg of Colorado-based promoters Clear Channel. "And Boulder is where Dave Matthews had real supporters before the rest of America caught on to him. In the '70s, they used to say that Boulder was 'where the hip meets the trip.'"



Brilliant! It's a restaurant in a truck!

An Omaha basement party: Something is wrong with this band's stagecraft. Can you guess what it is?



16 OMAHA, NE

In Nebraska, it's all going on underground . . . in the basements

IT'S HAPPY HOUR at Brother's Lounge: a guy with a two-foot mohawk sits at the bar next to a middle-aged man in a suit. They're not talking or even acknowledging each other's existence. But they're both nodding along to the Ministry song pumping out of the punk-heavy jukebox.

"Music unifies all kinds of people here," explains Chris Harding, manager of Drastic Plastic, a secondhand music store in town.

"We're just too

small a city for someone who is into, say, indie-rock to have the luxury of being isolated from someone who's into New Wave."

Add one part creative musicians, another part diehard rock fans. Mix them all together in a conservative town landlocked in the middle of the country, with few things to do *other* than see live music — the result is one of the most vibrant, exciting scenes in the country. The heart of Omaha is Sokol Hall, a polka dance hall turned rock haven. Skateboard kids slamdance with factory workers to local acts like the Faint, the Good Life and Bright Eyes — led by the patron saint of the Omaha scene, Conor Oberst.

But the real underground movement is literally that: underground. Omaha is a basement culture. "It's easy to showcase your band," says Robb Nansel, the founder of Saddle Creek

Records, the city's premier label, "because everyone has a basement, and you don't need to rent a bar or a rehearsal space." It's not unusual to find a basement party every night of the week with \$1 beers, grilled sausages and live music playing until the police shut it down.

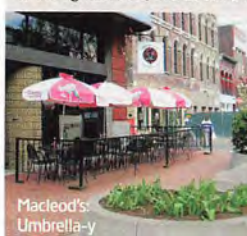
Omaha is an anomaly — a thriving boho culture in the middle of a working-class town. You might compare it to Seattle in the early '90s. But you might also get shot for doing so. Omahans pride themselves on *not* being scenesters. Says Harding, "Omaha doesn't have flannel like Seattle had flannel. It doesn't have coffeshops on every block. There's a lot of importance placed on individuality."



BEST TO: JOIN A READY-MADE BAND

KNOXVILLE, TN

★ IN K-TOWN, musicians and wannabes flock to Macleod's (501 Market) every other Wednesday — with guitars, harmonicas and bongos in tow — for Family Jam, a makeshift jam session where everyone in the bar is invited to play. While that doesn't always lead to the tightest sets, there's still a lot of love in the room.



"There's a fantastic vibe in Knoxville right now," says University of Tennessee student and Family Jam co-creator Holly Haworth. "It's a small pond, but there's still room for all the fish."

ESSENTIAL OMAHA >>>>



POPULATION About 390,000. (It's the forty-fourth largest city in the U.S.)

NATIVES Bright Eyes, Cursive, Marlon Brando, Johnny Carson

NEIGHBORS Alcoholic, 50-year-old property investor and womanizer who spends half of his year in France; 25-year-old painter slinging lattes while trying to get her bachelor's degree.

WHERE TO LIVE East of Dundee in Midtown. Average rent is about \$350 to \$400 for a one-bedroom apartment.

DRINK AT Brother's (3812 Farnam); the 49'r (4824 Dodge); Sullivan's (3926 Farnam) — "The best night is karaoke Thursdays," says Sullivan's manager, Dan Houlihan.

EAT AT Gorat's (4917 Center). "Our most popular dish is the Omaha, a 14-ounce sirloin with the bone," says Ellen, the night cashier.

BEST RECORD STORE Drastic Plastic (1209 Howard) "We get a lot of indie kids, plus the occasional 40-year-old looking to replace his Throbbing Gristle collection," manager Chris Harding says.

TALK LIKE A NATIVE People abbreviate everything here: *Profesh* is professional; *leeth* is lethal and *relig* is religion.

DRESS LIKE A NATIVE Girls: Lots of tan leather and open-toe high heels. Guys: Tight retro T-shirts or sweaters (has to be tight) and baggy jeans.

18 TUCSON, AZ

Where you can hear everything from mariachi to psychedelic rock. In the same venue



AT A HOUSE PARTY in the barrio on the south side of Tucson, a two-man band called Doo Rag jams under the desert sun. One guy is ripping on an old blues guitar; the other plays percussion on tin cans and boxes. Unbelievably, it sounds... good. "This kind of thing happens all the time," explains Michael Toubassi, director of *High and Dry*, an upcoming documentary about music in Tucson. "Amazing musicians playing right there in someone's backyard."

Best known for its saguaro cactuses, the University of Arizona and its starring role in the lyrics of the Beatles' "Get Back," Tucson has had a rock revival in the past decade. Californians now come here for grass. Show up and you're likely to hear just about anything — provided you're not standing outside of Francisco Studios on East Pennington. The walls of this cavernous building, formerly occupied by U.S. West, are heavily soundproofed, allowing several acts to practice at the same time. "Pretty much every band in town rehearses there," says Denny Seefeldt, an employee at Tucson's Rainbow Guitars, home to one of the best vintage guitar collections in the country.

When rehearsals are done, the bands head to town to play at any one of several venues.

BEST FOR: METAL

GRAND RAPIDS, MI

★ "WE'RE THREE HOURS from both Chicago and Detroit, so we get a lot of good acts passing through," says Josh Newman of Intersection, one of Grand Rapids' classic concert venues for more than 25 years. Kid Rock, Limp Bizkit and Henry Rollins all played here. Hometown acts find support as well. Every January and February, Intersection hosts the Heavyweight Championship, a battle of the bands. "It's crazy," Newman says. "The bands are loud; the place is packed. You see mullets flying around." This year's champ? An incredibly angry group called Drench.



Plush, a small club located in the heart of downtown, is a fan favorite. "It's one of the best music rooms in town," says Marty Kool, a long-time Tucson resident and the host of *Blues Review* on KXCI radio. "The sound is spectacular." The Club Congress at the Hotel Congress is another standard — Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top once said it was his favorite venue in the nation. The El Casino Ballroom, an old Mexican wedding hall, is the kind of southwestern venue that can rarely be found elsewhere in the States: as likely to host mariachi as psychedelic rock.

With local heroes like Calexico winning fans with their eerie, ethereal, "desert noir" sound, Tucson's reputation as a music oasis is growing. Talented Tucsonians on the rise include country songster Teddy Morgan, singer-songwriter Chris Holiman, Bob Log III (Tom Waits is a fan) and bands like Giant Sand, Al Perry & the Cattle and Love Mound. "Tucson," says Toubassi, "has never been credited for the amount of talent it has."

ESSENTIAL TUCSON >>>>

POPULATION About 500,000. (It's the thirtieth largest city in the U.S.)

NEIGHBORS A white-haired, 60-year-old cowboy sitting on his front porch with a cheek full of Levi Garrett. Five 19-year-old U. of A. students doing beer bongs in the backyard.

WHERE TO LIVE West University. Lots of nice old houses with character, some of which were built as far back as the 1920s. Monthly rent: \$400 for a one-bedroom. "The cost of living is pretty decent here," Kool says, "which is good, because the pay scale is pretty low."

BEST STREET CORNER The corner of 4th Avenue and 6th Street. It's smack in the middle of the 4th Avenue district, the epicenter of Tucson's downtown nightlife.

DRINK AT The Tap Room at Club Congress (311 East Congress). "The average local grabs a can of Pabst for \$1.50," says bartender Miguel Carter. **EAT AT** Mi Nidito (1813 South 4th Avenue). The best Mexican food in town, hands down, according to locals. "President Clinton was even in here in 1999," says owner-manager Jimmy Lopez.

TALK LIKE A NATIVE White hipsters speak "Spanglish," a hybrid of border-town Spanish and California English — substituting words when appropriate: "Dude, that guy who poured me my cerveza was a big-league pinché pendejo." Translation: "Dude, the bartender is an asshole."

DRESS LIKE A

NATIVE

Wear whatever's comfortable — in the summer, that means not much at all. And pretty much the same goes for winter, too.



EDITED BY JONATHAN SMALL. WRITTEN BY NICK CATUCCI, MATT DIEHL, JACOB KALISH, SETH KELLY, BRAD LISTI, JOHN RATLIFF, JONATHAN SMALL AND JONAH WEINER

BEST FOR: A PIT STOP

ALPINE, TX

★ THIS TINY TOWN on the edge of the Big Bend desert has two things: brutal summer dust storms, and Railroad Blues. This is literally the only live-music club for hundreds of miles — the closest city is a two-hour drive away. Featuring bands like Asleep at the Wheel, Omar and the Howlers and Canned Heat, the club offers a mix of musical genres — reggae, rock, rockabilly and country... plus 128 types of beer. "This wasn't supposed to work," says owner Richard Fallon, thoughtfully. "But we built it, and they came."



THE LEAST ROCK & ROLL TOWN IN THE U.S.A.

PURDY, MO

Four churches, 1,103 people, no drinking, dancing or CDs. It's the law!

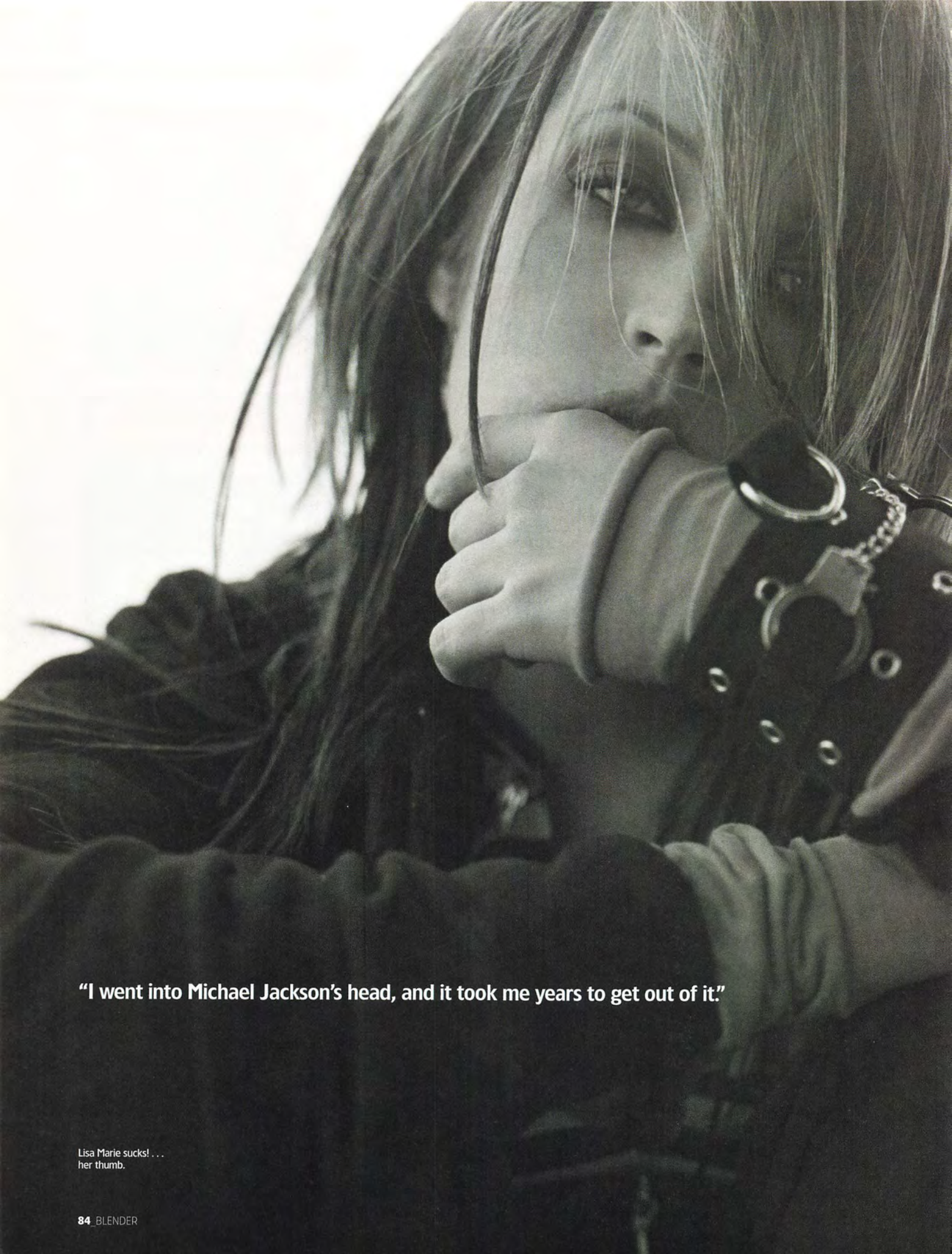
THINK THE electric slide can lead to teen pregnancy? That the funky chicken is Satanic? Then you'll like the Christian fundamentalists of this tiny Missouri town, who have collaborated for more than a century to outlaw dancing on school grounds, arguing that busting a move leads to sin.

"There's an 11 P.M. curfew, our diner closes at 2 or 3 P.M. and there are two gas stations for kids to hang out at," says Tosha, 17. If you want to get your rocks off, you'd better have a car. Purdy has no bars, clubs or record stores (though there are four churches), and the nearest place to buy "explicit" CDs is the Music Center, 30 miles away. Otherwise, you're stuck with the Monett Wal-Mart: "We take out the bad words," says Janice, a clerk. "And we refuse to sell Eminem." With good reason: A Slim Shady LP, like body piercings, can get you kicked out of your house, Tosha says. "I like Purdy, but I wish I had grown up somewhere with more opportunities." [BLENDER]



LAMEST TOWN OF THEM ALL!

Well, hello, Mr. Chuckles!



"I went into Michael Jackson's head, and it took me years to get out of it."

Lisa Marie sucks! . . .
her thumb.



“Pain Inspires Me”

Just as well, since **Lisa Marie Presley** has suffered her fair share of it. Now she's taken it all — the death of her father, the fanatical public scrutiny, the failed marriages to Michael Jackson and Nicolas Cage — and poured it into her debut album. “I use songs as weapons,” she tells *Blender*.

BY MIRANDA SAWYER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY DURAN



FAMOUS SINCE THE moment she was born on February 1, 1968, Lisa Marie Presley has spent most of her 35 years ducking the spotlight: the glare that will always surround her father, Elvis Aron, and the flashbulbs that popped around two of her three husbands: Michael Jackson and Nicolas Cage. Now she has made her own move into the sun with her first album, *To Whom It May Concern*, a collection of meditative L.A. country-soul songs that show off her rumble-deep voice and lyrical twists. She looks like her dad in the video for her first single, “Lights Out”: “Yeah, the black leather doesn’t help,” she says. “Next time I’ll dress like Elton John.”

Blender meets Presley at a rehearsal studio in North Hollywood. Small and scowly, with pink hair extensions, wrapped in black cargo pants and a black top, she gives off a “don’t mess” vibe as plain as if it were tattooed on her forehead. But she’s no princess, just wary and self-protective. Though she has plenty to be serious about, she’s quick to laugh, especially at herself. “Four words to describe myself?” she cracks. “Crazy-ass motherfucking shithead!”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Why would the daughter of rock & roll’s most famous icon want to release an album and invite all this scrutiny?

I wanted to put something real out there to end 35 years of speculation. My hope is that I can break through my legacy and earn my own credentials as an artist. Not for some stupid, superficial reason, like I want to be a pop icon, but because it would make me feel more like I can hold my head up.

What inspires you to write?

Pain. I use songs as weapons. I’ve written some really good, nasty songs about people I’ve been involved with, and then I make sure they hear it somehow. “Better Beware” is like that. “Gone,” too — I was pissed off. →

Is "Gone" about Nicolas Cage?

[Raises eyebrows] Maybe, maybe not. I don't know.

How's your love life at the moment?

Quiet. It needs to stay quiet right now. I have something else to focus on, thank God. If I don't have something to keep me busy, I get into all kinds of trouble.

Do you ever think that maybe you got married too young?

No, but I did live my life in reverse. [Presley married fellow Scientologist Danny Keough when she was 20.] All the friends I had back then were crazy. Now they're married with kids, and I've turned back into a fucking 12-year-old. So that's funny. I got married early and had two kids and lived very stably for six years and then went fucking crazy.

Like going from Danny Keough . . . to Michael Jackson!

You know, nobody knows him. He's like the Wizard of Oz, working this whole machine about himself. And he doesn't let a lot of people see who he really is, but he let me see, and he was very normal. I felt like I was talking to someone I knew, like a brother. OK, maybe we shouldn't have gotten married, but we were both raised a little differently and were in situations that normal people would not be in, so we had a connection.

I don't see why people can't see that. They kept saying, "She wants a singing career, she wants this, she wants that," and I'm like, "Wait a minute: I have never once, of my own free will, been in the spotlight." I got his stigma, I was caught in his loop.

We're not in contact now.

Do you now think "Was I crazy?"

Yeah, of course. I don't relate anymore to the person I was at that time. I was really in Michael's world — I went into his head, into his land, and it took me years to get out of it. It's quite a web you go into. Being the small young bug that I was.

In your position, it must be a little hard to trust people. Who are your friends?

People I've known since I was 16. My children are my best friends, but I have a crew of about six people who are always there for me. I don't like clubs: Even though I have a pretty strong "stay back!" thing about



All the way from Memphis: newborn Lisa Marie with Elvis and Priscilla, 1968



With daughter Danielle and son Benjamin, June 2002

me, drunk people break through — hanging all over me and saying stupid stuff. So I like to go to friends' houses, or they come to mine. We sit around

the fire and laugh and be stupid. Play music. Drink red wine.

What are your favorite Elvis Presley records and films?

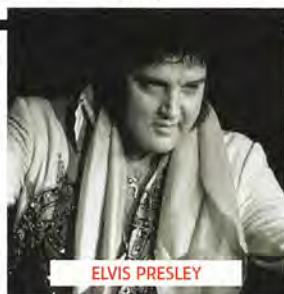
I like *Jailhouse Rock* and *Love Me Tender*, the black-and-white films. With music, I tend more toward the '70s stuff, because I was at the shows for those, so they bring back memories.

Have you ever seen a good Elvis impersonator?

I've never actually seen one live — I've seen them on TV. I bumped into one once in Las Vegas. He was in the lobby. There was a Marilyn Monroe look-alike and an Elvis look-alike, and he noticed me and recognized me like that [snaps fingers]. I turned red and started running.

You went through something of a rebellious adolescent stage. . . .

After my father died, I stayed relatively sane for two years, although I did lose my noodle at summer camp right after my dad's death. But when I hit 12, 13, that was it. I hated my mom's boyfriend, and



ELVIS PRESLEY



MICHAEL JACKSON

Elvis vs. Jacko: Who's More Bananas?

Both are brilliant stars with their share of idiosyncrasies. But for once and for all, who's the King of Crazy?

HOME



Graceland, a tacky Southern mansion with a racquetball court and a "jungle room" that was actually foliage-free

Neverland, a tacky California mansion with a "petting" zoo and an amusement park

EDGE: JACKSON

FAMOUS FRIENDS

President Nixon, Ann-Margret, Jack Lord

Bubbles the chimp, Macaulay Culkin, Elizabeth Taylor

EDGE: JACKSON



SEXUAL TASTES

Mostly youngish women, ideally clad in white panties

Well, we all have our theories, don't we?

EDGE: JACKSON



TOYS

Slot race cars, real cars, guns

Llamas, Ferris wheels, young boys

EDGE: JACKSON

FOOD

A pound of bacon, four helpings of mashed potatoes, gravy, sauerkraut for his main meal. Fried peanut-butter sandwiches for a snack.

EDGE: PRESLEY

A healthy, balanced diet



That million-foot-tall statue that sailed down the Thames

EDGE: JACKSON

STUNTS

Shooting televisions

LEGACY

Invented rock & roll

Sadly, that stuff with the kiddies

EDGE: JACKSON

AND THE WINNER IS . . .

Jacko in a moonwalk, 6-1. As if there was ever any doubt. . . . JOHN AIZLEWOOD



Presley: "I love you." Keough: "This is forever."



Presley: "I love you." Jackson: "Where's Bubbles?"



Presley: "I love you." Cage: "We're finished!"

there was a lot of control on me. I didn't like that, so I rebelled.

I was threatening to emancipate. To be honest, I was just an I-don't-give-a-fuck-type teenager: the self-loathing, the angst, the hatred, the misery. It's normal. I was hanging out with people who started doing drugs, and I did too. Sometimes I liked cocaine; sometimes I liked painkillers. I smoked pot all the time. I'd do all of it and drink at the same time.

It was crazy. But I was never addicted to anything at all. It was just a choice I made, and then I stopped — when I was 17. And I've never done a drug recreationally since.

Why did you stop?

I had very deep, involved questions about life, people, the mind, sanity, insanity: *What the fuck am I doing here?* kinds of questions. They bugged me to the point where I couldn't sleep for three days.

That's where Scientology came in. When I was out of control, my mom kicked me out of the house. I went to live in the [Scientology] castle on Sunset and Franklin [in Los Angeles] — people from the church would take care of me and try to get both of us to calm the fuck down.

Do you understand your mother, Priscilla, more now that you have kids of your own? My kids are so much more together than I ever was. They're my baby-sitters! It's funny having kids when you're young, because you grow up with them. There's something to be said for having them when you're young, and then having them again when you're 35 or 40 and have been through it all. I want to have one or two more.

What characteristics have you inherited from your mother?

Her strength. She's very strong. I admire her business sense — I'm not a numb-nuts, but I haven't inherited it completely. I'm a monkey, an Aquarius, an artist. I'm more head-in-the-clouds. She's on it.

What about from your dad?

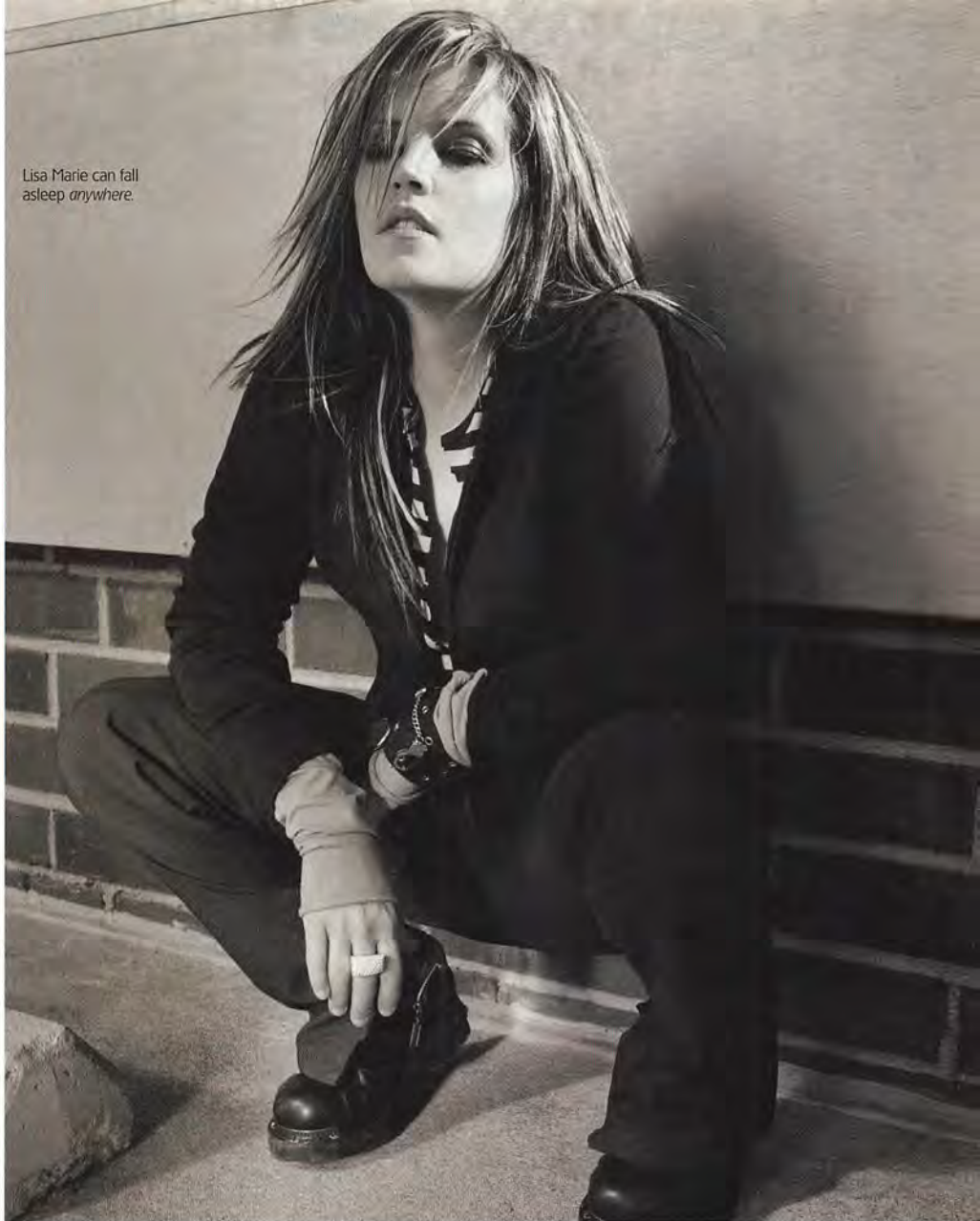
If you ask my family in Memphis, they'll tell you "Every one of his characteristics," but I'll say sense of humor and temper. He didn't have a quick temper, but when he was angry, he was *ang-ry*. If you betrayed him or he was hurt by someone, oh, God, the roof would blow off the house. And that's how I get. I want asses served to me on a platter for lunch when I'm angry.

When was the last time you were like that? When Nic filed for divorce.

Weren't you expecting it?

No. It was a stupid fight — he threatened to, and then, you know, he did it. It was a

Lisa Marie can fall asleep *anywhere*.



"Sometimes I liked cocaine; sometimes I liked painkillers."



temper tantrum that went global. We were just two wild orchids, two pirates. We were breaking up and getting back together when we weren't married, but you can't do that when you're actually married. It's too big, and it affects too many people.

Marriage can either amplify prior problems or it can solve everything. We were hoping it was going to be the latter, but it didn't work out that way. It was naive and in the moment and optimistic. Now we're fine — he's redeeming himself in my book. I still care about him, and we still talk.

Do you ever worry about death?

All the time. I'm a hypochondriac. Yesterday it was brain damage from the

vodka the night before. Today, heart attack — my arm and chest started hurting at the same time.

When you think of your father, what do you think of?

That he could do no wrong in my eyes. He was a larger-than-life figure to me, someone I admired in every way. I was a daddy's girl.

There's a saying that the true test of a human is his ability to handle power. I think it's true. You could give a perfectly fine person a lot of power and watch him be a complete asshole, or see somebody struggle with it and try to figure it out. He was in a situation that would never be easy for anyone, and he didn't understand why it was all happening to him.

People in that situation destroy themselves, because they don't know what to do with the admiration. Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin — they overdo it, over-indulge, because there's nothing else to compensate. I understand all that. [BLENDER]

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT >>>>>>

FLEETWOOD MAC

They used to travel on Hitler's train. They toured with a 70-foot inflatable penguin. But first, dizzied by sex and drugs, they had to make one of rock's landmark albums. "We were," Mick Fleetwood admits, "crazy..."

BY ADAM HIGGINBOTHAM

1 FLEETWOOD MAC WERE NAMED FOR THEIR RHYTHM SECTION.

Legendary (and legendarily nutty) British blues guitarist Peter Green formed the band in 1967 around drummer Mick Fleetwood and bassist John McVie. "None of us would be here without Peter Green," Fleetwood says.

2 GREEN, THE BAND'S FIRST GUITARIST, LEFT AFTER TAKING TOO MUCH LSD.

After a 1970 show in Munich, Green went to an acid party thrown

by a group of rich German hippies. "I just sat around thinking and thought about everything," he said. "I was thinking so fast; I couldn't believe how fast I was thinking! And I ran out of thoughts. I must have been thinking solid for about an hour." Afterward, Green announced that he wanted to join a commune, and insisted that the band donate all of its earnings to charity.

3 THE STAR OF EARLY FLEETWOOD MAC SHOWS WAS A DILDO.

A pink, 16-inch rubber dildo named Harold. "Our roadie would bring out Harold on a big platter, as if he were the butler delivering tea," Fleetwood says. "Harold would be attached to my bass drum by way of a suction cup at his base and would spend the evening quivering and vibrating in an erect position at the ladies in our audience."

4 MICK FLEETWOOD NEVER PLAYS WITHOUT HIS BALLS.

Two wooden balls hanging from his belt. "My drum solo consisted of

me stepping out in front of the kit and dancing while clacking my balls together. I still have these wooden balls, and I never play without them. If I didn't have them, I'd be very loath to play at all."

5 JOHN McVIE IS FASCINATED BY PENGUINS.

When he lived near the London zoo, he spent hours watching the flightless birds. On the Mac's 1972 album, *Future Games*, there's a photograph of a penguin where McVie should be. The following year, the band named an album *Penguin*. Fleetwood Mac's publishing company was named after a species of penguin, as was McVie's yacht. Finally, McVie went out one night, got extremely drunk and had a penguin tattooed on one of his forearms.

6 THEY LOST THEIR SECOND GUITARIST TO A FREAKISH CHRISTIAN SECT.

The day before a gig in Los Angeles in 1971, Jeremy Spencer said he was going out to a bookstore and never returned. Road managers combed the streets for him; →



Fleetwood Mac in 2003, from left: Lindsey Buckingham, John McVie, Stevie Nicks, Mick Fleetwood



This page, from left: Cliff Watts; Jeff Abertson/Corbis. Opposite page: Neal Preston/Corbis



"Making *Rumours* was an exercise in denial."

the FBI, Interpol and a renowned psychic were involved in a lengthy search. Eventually, the band's manager found Spencer in a warehouse with the Children of God. He had shaved his head, renounced his possessions and taken the name Jonathan.

7 THEIR THIRD LEAD GUITARIST LEFT BECAUSE NOBODY WOULD TALK TO HIM.

In 1972, the band was touring America in a pair of station wagons, but everyone had stopped speaking to Danny Kirwan. Five minutes before one show, he went into the bathroom and repeatedly smashed his head against the wall, spattering blood everywhere. He then destroyed his guitar and refused to go onstage. Instead, he watched from the audience as the band struggled to play without him. He gave Mick Fleetwood a critique of the performance afterward. Then Fleetwood fired him.

8 AND THE FOURTH GUITARIST WAS FIRED FOR HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH MICK FLEETWOOD'S WIFE.

On tour: "I couldn't take it," Fleetwood says, "mentally."

9 NEXT UP: THE PHONY FLEETWOOD MAC.

After yet another tour disaster, their manager, Clifford Davis, announced he was fed up: "I fucking own Fleetwood Mac," he explained, and with the real band scattered around the world, he promptly assembled his own version to tour the U.S.: the New Fleetwood Mac. Nobody was fooled. "At a few gigs," recalls road manager John Courage, "people threw shit at the musicians."

10 MEANWHILE, PETER GREEN TOLD THE MANAGER TO STOP SENDING HIM ROYALTY CHECKS — OR HE'D SHOOT HIM.

The manager reported the threat. British police arrested Green, who was committed. "I don't think it was a real gun," Fleetwood says. "But he made quite a bold statement."

11 BEFORE THEY JOINED THE BAND, L.A. FOLKIES LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM AND STEVIE NICKS RELEASED AN ALBUM OF THEIR OWN.

They were both topless on the cover. Nicks bought a new blouse for the shoot, but Buckingham didn't like it, so he made her pose



Fleetwood Mac in 1968. From left: Mick Fleetwood, Peter Green, John McVie, Danny Kirwan, Jeremy Spencer



Nice mustache: Cover photo of 1973 Buckingham Nicks LP



12 SUCCESS DID NOT MAKE THEM HAPPY.

The 1975 album *Fleetwood Mac* made them millionaires. But by the time they began to record *Rumours*, the couples — John and Christine McVie, Nicks and Buckingham — had split up. Fleetwood, too, was getting divorced. The band spent 18 hours a day in the studio but didn't speak. "Making *Rumours* was an exercise in denial," Buckingham says. "Trying to get the music done, minimizing the distress of having to produce songs for Stevie when I didn't even want to see her."

13 DRUGS MADE RECORDING RUMOURS A RATHER PAINSTAKING PROCESS.

For instance: The band required four days, nine pianos and three



14 THEY CAN'T REMEMBER HOW OR WHY THEY STARTED TAKING COCAINE.

"Everybody across the board was indulging in cocaine at that time," Buckingham says. Notes Fleetwood: "I wandered into it — and then I turned around and I was in the middle of a train wreck. It was in my life for a long, long, long time. About 25 years."

tuners to find Christine McVie a keyboard that "sounded right." They enlisted the help of a blind man and someone known only as the "Looner Tuner." "We felt that the piano was not holding tune," Fleetwood says. "Whether the piano was wrong, or whether we had lost our marbles —" Buckingham cuts in: "That's what it was."

15 FLEETWOOD WANTED TO GIVE HIS COKE DEALER A CREDIT ON THE ALBUM.

"Unfortunately," he says, "he got snuffed — executed! — before the thing came out."

16 "THE CHAIN" IS THE ONLY SONG EVER WRITTEN BY ALL FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BAND.

"John does not write," Buckingham says of McVie. "His contribution to that was so fundamental: The riff that starts the whole tag — boom da-dad-doo-da-da-doo-doo-doo — was so thematic and dramatic."

17 WITHOUT ALL THE RELATIONSHIP DRAMA, RUMOURS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NEARLY SO SUCCESSFUL.

Buckingham: "A great deal of the appeal was that people could look at the whole soap-opera aspect. It's like being a voyeur and looking into people's bedrooms."

18 AND IT MADE FLEETWOOD MAC THE "SOAP-OPERA BAND."

"We were pigeonholed into a clichéd way of being looked at," Buckingham recalls. "Two couples: two chicks, two guys, breaking up, writing songs to one another."

19 BUT IT ALSO MADE THEM VERY POWERFUL.

Mick Fleetwood was even able to broker a record deal for Peter Green. The deal was set until Green sat down with record-company executives. "And then, in the office," Fleetwood says, "he suddenly said, 'I can't do this. It's the work of the devil!'"

20 IN 1977, THE WHOLE PENGUIN THING GOT REALLY OUT OF HAND.

The band designed a giant dirigible version of the flightless bird, 70 feet tall, intended to rise up from the back of the stage at the climax of stadium shows and then float out over the audience. "It would never fully inflate — it must have had leaks or something," Buckingham says. "This thing was →

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limping and floundering at the back of the stage. It never flew." Adds Fleetwood: "It was a disaster."

21 NOT ALL OF THE BAND EMBRACED BUCKINGHAM'S "NEW DIRECTION" ON THE 1979 ALBUM *TUSK*.

He discovered punk and New Wave. He recorded vocal parts on his knees in a bathroom. The rest of Fleetwood Mac, however, did not become fans of Talking Heads or the Clash. "You could say that," Buckingham says. "Nobody did. Nor are they now. But what are you gonna do?"

22 THEY BUILT AN ENTIRELY NEW STUDIO TO MAKE *TUSK*.

Everything was built to the band's specs: echo chambers developed to Buckingham's requirements (including a special tiled room because of his fondness for recording in bathrooms) and English lager on tap in the lounge. When the meter stopped running, their bill for studio time was \$1.4 million. "By the time we got out of that studio," Fleetwood recalls, "we could have bought it."

23 BUT THAT STILL WASN'T ENOUGH FOR THEM.

Fleetwood wanted the song "Tusk" to feature a brass band as accompaniment. He hired the 112-piece Trojan Marching Band from the University of Southern California and recorded them outdoors at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. He still plays with the USC band from time to time. "Even Lindsey's done it with me," he says. "I've done it quite a few times. They still play 'Tusk.' And now they play 'Don't Stop' as well."

24 THEY PRACTICALLY INVENTED PRERELEASE ALBUM BOOTLEGGING.

In 1979, before the release of *Tusk*, Fleetwood Mac staged a landmark event: The entire double album was broadcast on the radio network Westwood One. "They played it from top to bottom," Fleetwood says, "without interruption." From all across California came the click of tape recorders being switched on. Who thought up the idea? "That would be our record company. It wasn't a very good idea at all, actually," Fleetwood notes. "They," Buckingham points out, "were doing cocaine, too."



Not surprisingly, they didn't live happily ever after.



Dude looks like... Stevie Nicks?

25 ON A EUROPEAN LEG OF THE *TUSK* TOUR, THEY SPENT THREE WEEKS TRAVELING IN ADOLF HITLER'S OLD TRAIN.

"It was beautiful," Fleetwood says. "Like those train trips you get around Europe now, all velvet and walnut." Says Buckingham: "We didn't ask for Hitler's train."

26 THE *TUSK* TOUR PROVED TO BE VERY, VERY EXPENSIVE.

There were limousines for everyone — even the lighting guys. Hotel rooms were redecorated in advance to make the color schemes suitable for Nicks and Christine McVie. Nicks had to have a piano in every suite she stayed in. Fleetwood: "We were all crazy. I remember a piano winched up —" Buckingham: "Nine floors up."

27 BUCKINGHAM FINALLY SUCCUMBED TO THE CURSE OF FLEETWOOD MAC GUITARISTS.

At one show in New Zealand, as Nicks sang "Rhiannon," he pulled



EVENTUALLY, FLEETWOOD MAC HAD TO INTRODUCE DRUG RATIONING.

Their road manager handed out one Heineken bottle cap full of cocaine to each member of the band before they went onstage. "Even in the lunatic days,"



Fleetwood says, "there was a sense of responsibility. We would rein ourselves in. I would not want to walk onstage completely coked out to the point where it was... not acceptable."



Clintonstock: Fleetwood Mac perform at the president's inaugural celebration, 1993.

his jacket over his head and began performing a grotesque imitation of her. Christine McVie slapped him. "I might have chucked a glass of wine over him, too," she says. "I didn't think that was the way to treat a paying audience."

29 IN 1984, MICK FLEETWOOD WENT BANKRUPT.

"People were saying that I'd put \$8 million up my nose, but if I'd done all the things they said, I'd have been dead long ago."

30 BUCKINGHAM HAS NEVER ATTENDED THE "NIGHT OF A THOUSAND STEVIES."

Nor will he be turning up for the annual New York gathering of drag queens and Nicks look-alikes anytime soon. "She gets a lot of people at her shows who dress like her. I don't know if I could handle that, though."

31 EVEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAD A HARD TIME GETTING BUCKINGHAM BACK INTO FLEETWOOD MAC.

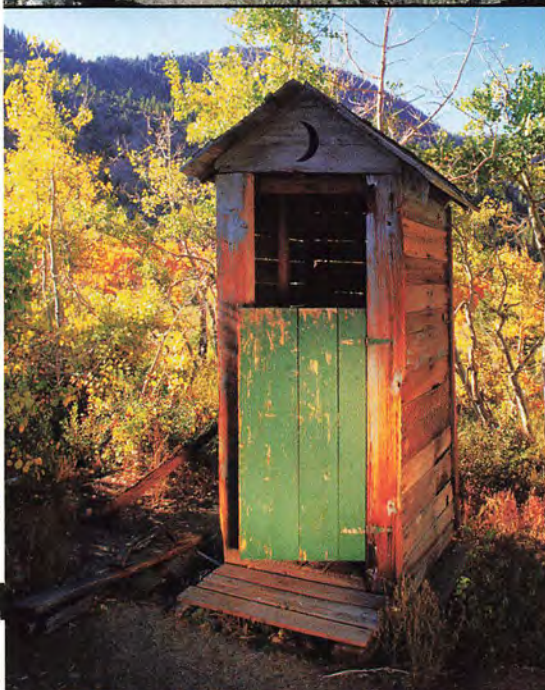
When asked to rejoin the band to perform "Don't Stop" for Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993, Buckingham couldn't make up his mind. "I called Lindsey," Nicks says, "and said, 'If you cheat me out of this moment, I'll never speak to you again.' So he did it."

32 BUT CLINTON DIDN'T JOIN THEM ON SAX.

"No. I'm a little surprised," Fleetwood says. Adds Buckingham, "He probably wanted to."

33 MAKING THEIR FIRST NEW STUDIO CD IN 16 YEARS, SAY YOU WILL, WAS NOT AT ALL LIKE RUMOURS OR *TUSK*.

"Mick and I both have little children now, so we can't live, nor would we want to live, the kind of lives we did," Buckingham says. "It's more meticulous. And the hours are better." [BLENDER]

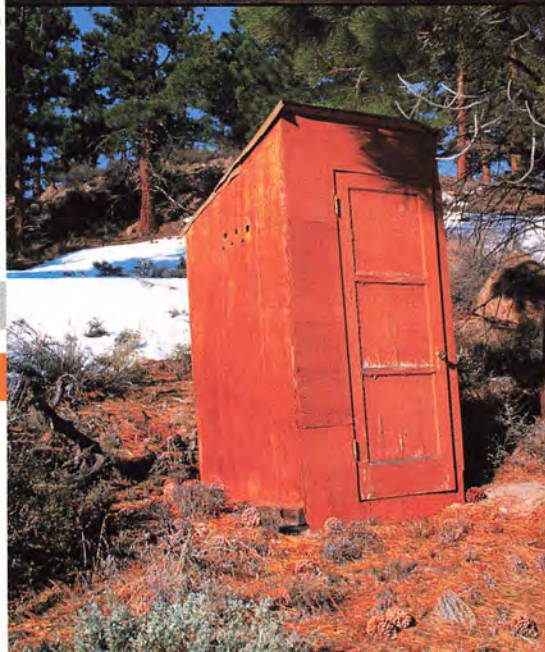
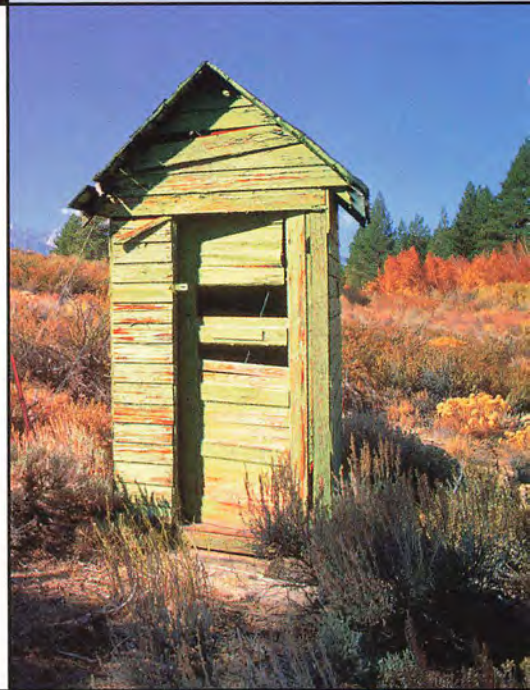


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"All I Can See Is That Pileup Of Bodies..."

» The February 20 fire at the Station nightclub is impossible to forget for one group of Rhode Islanders. They lost two friends — husband and wife Steve and Andrea Mancini — in one of the deadliest infernos America has ever seen. And for at least one friend consumed with grief, "The world as I knew it is over..."

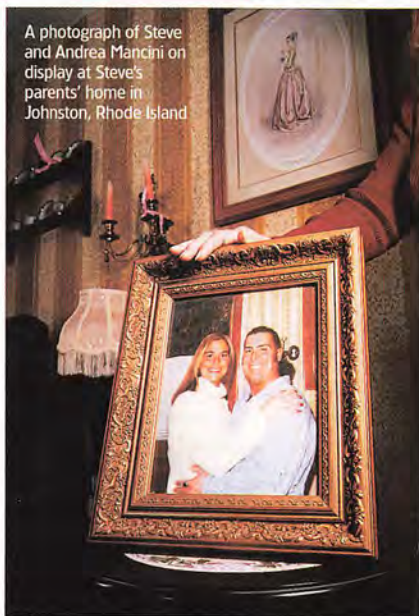
BY VANESSA GRIGORIADIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ETHAN HILL

★ YOU COULD MESS with Steve Mancini, but not with his hair. He got it cut every two weeks at his wife's cousin's salon. He liked long, pointy sideburns, and he shaved the bottom part of his skull up to the tops of his ears. The rest of it he kept long, even at age 39, in a ponytail that hung to his shoulder blades in its naturally curly state, and far longer when he had it blow-dried straight. All the hairdressers in the salon would crowd around him when he was there, laughing: No guys *ever* come in here, let alone twice a month.

Mancini didn't mind being teased — he enjoyed being the center of attention — but not even his friends really wanted to mess with him. His nickname was "Steven Seagal," and he had a black belt in karate and lifted weights daily at the Powerhouse gym down the street from his parents' house.

He also worked as a bouncer every weekend at the Station, the West Warwick, Rhode Island, hard-rock club that was the center of his world for a half-dozen years. He didn't have to break up many fights — just occasionally pull apart drunken girls who were clawing at each other in a dispute over a guy. Some nights he even played guitar at the Station

A photograph of Steve and Andrea Mancini on display at Steve's parents' home in Johnston, Rhode Island



with the band he had started with his cousin Keith Mancini, 33, and their buddies Tom Conte, 25, and Al Prudhomme, 38. They called the band Fathead, which was what Steve's wife, Andrea, used to call him sometimes as a playful term of endearment.

The Station was where Mancini went when he left the salon on February 20, 2003. It was going to be a big night: One of the major perks of being a bouncer was that the club's owners, brothers Jeff and Michael Derderian, usually let Fathead open for national acts that came through

"I will never forget Steve. I know he is singing with the angels."

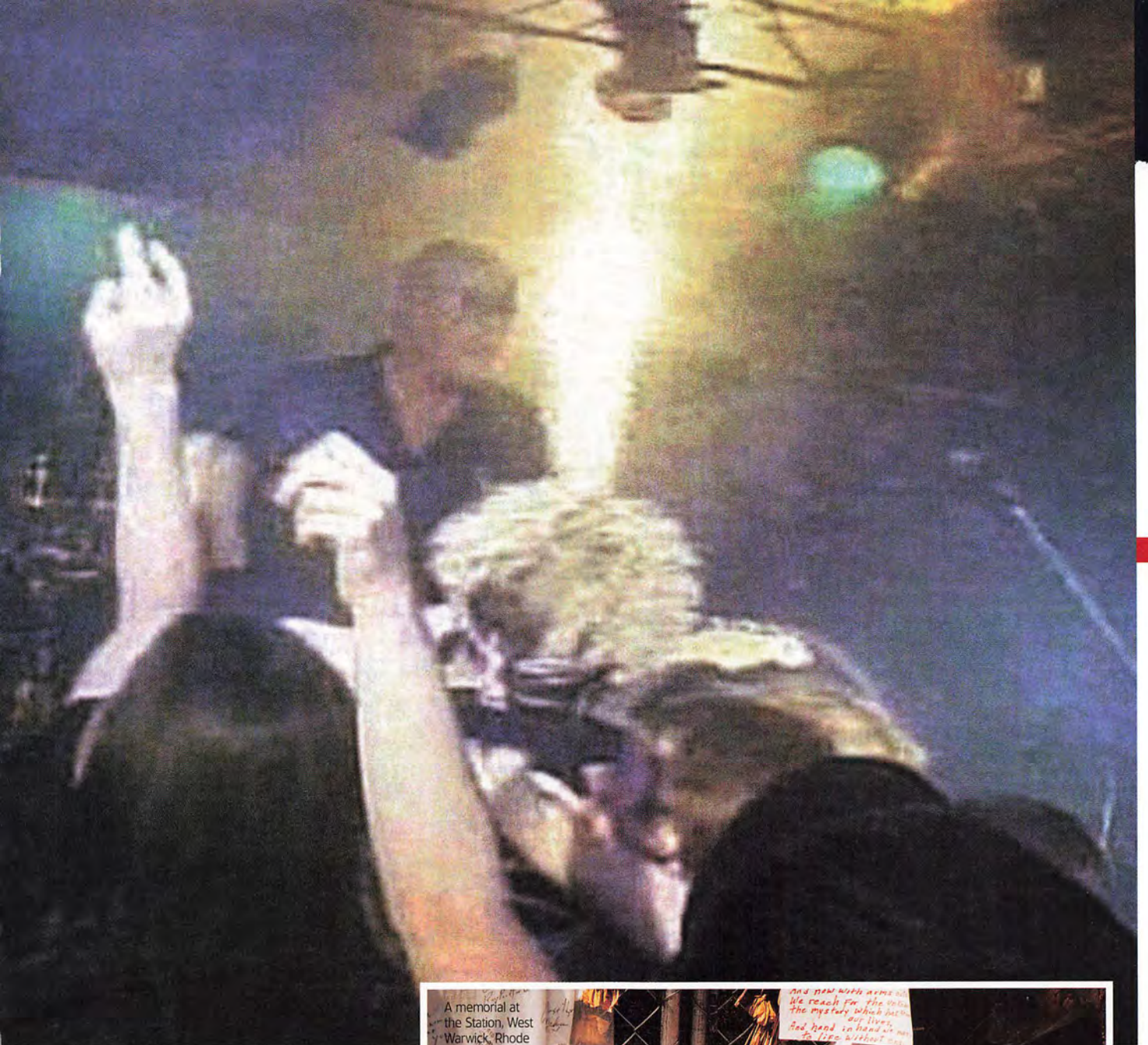


February 20, 11 p.m.: Great White lead singer Jack Russell (left) moments before the fire began



town. They didn't get paid, but still, what could be better? Mancini was an old-school hard-rock fan — Led Zeppelin and Van Halen were his favorites — and that's the music that packed in the townies at the Station: tribute bands like Sabbath Bloody Sabbath, Mr. Breeze (Lynyrd Skynyrd) and Diver Down (Van Halen). About once a month, the club would feature fallen '80s-metal heroes playing the small-club circuit: Quiet Riot, Warrant, Skid Row. After most shows, Mancini would ask the band to scribble their signatures with a metallic-silver pen on one of his old guitars. He brought the guitar that night, too, hoping to get it signed by the headlining act, L.A. metal band Great White.

But by the time Great White were halfway through their first song, "Desert Moon," the Station had gone up in flames. That winter night, a dumb-

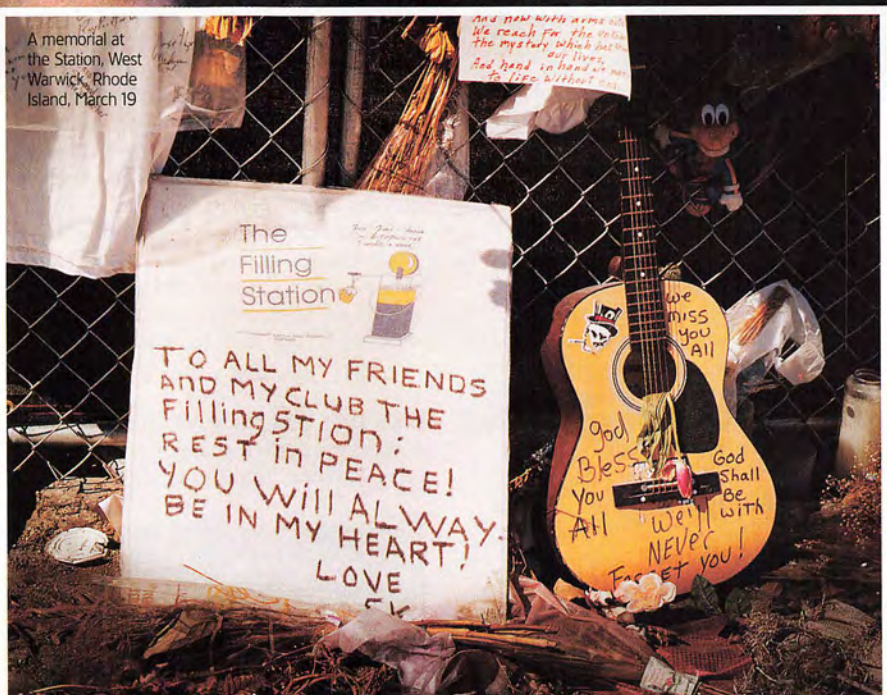


A memorial at the Station, West Warwick, Rhode Island, March 19

foundling convergence of arena-rock pyrotechnics and cheap, highly flammable insulation foam ignited the fourth-worst fire in U.S. nightclub history. Of the 370 fans inside, 99 were killed and nearly 190 injured, some hospitalized with burns so severe that their legs had to be amputated or their eyelids cut off.

Steve Mancini, Keith Mancini and Tom Conte were standing by the door with Andrea, who had just recently started working at the Station on weekends as a ticket taker, mostly to keep her husband company.

Perpetually enthusiastic, with blond highlights and a year-round tan, Andrea, 28, was the perfect complement to Steve's goofball good nature. Married for 15 months, they were the kind of couple who did everything together and still did little things to surprise each other. On a recent trip to a nearby casino, Andrea surrep- →



titiously ducked into a novelty store and bought him a framed photo of Ozzy Osbourne that he had coveted.

That night, he had his arm around her, listening to Great White. The small, tight-knit group of friends was so far from where the band was playing that when the fire started creeping up the sides of the stage, none of them noticed it. They didn't even think anything was wrong until a few moments later, when people began to jostle.

Keith disappeared into the crowd to get his jacket. Steve went to rescue his prized possessions — his guitars. Andrea tried to edge around the counter she was standing behind, but it was too crowded; she kept getting shoved back by the wave of people now coming hard toward them. Conte kept telling her to jump over the counter, but she cried that she couldn't. Then the electricity went out, and smoke from the burning foam became black and thick as mud. People were pushing Conte from behind, relentlessly. He was swept up in the panicking crowd.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE FIRST THING Conte saw when he got outside was a man bent over, his hands submerged in a snowbank. When Conte asked if he needed help, the man lifted his arms — from fingers to elbow, they were nothing but blood and bones.

The air was filled with the screams of those trapped inside, punctuated by the sound of breaking glass as clubgoers who were little more than two-legged balls of fire jumped out of windows. Some people's skin hung off their bodies like strips of tissue paper, or their scalps were missing, or they had faces that were no longer faces — just protruding foreheads and cheekbones.

The stampede to get out the front door had created a massive bottleneck, and as more and more people fell underfoot, the bodies started to pile up, stacking lengthwise, seven or eight people high. Fifty arms grabbed the air, hoping that someone, anyone, could pull them out before the fire that was rushing across the ceiling reached the door.

"A guy at the bottom of the pile looked straight at me and said, 'My legs are pinned, dude, get me the hell out of here! My legs are pinned!'" says Mike Kaczmarczyk, a friend of Mancini's who had brought his girlfriend to the Great White show as a belated Valentine's Day gift. "I pulled and pulled, but I couldn't budge him. Then the flames started



Steve Mancini's mother and stepfather, Barbara and Doug Magness, at home in Johnston, Rhode Island

burning the people on top of the pile, and there was nothing else we could do."

The fire was so hot that Steve's Volkswagen Jetta, parked in its prime location next to the club's back door, burned to its metal chassis, incinerating the aluminum and glass. Not even the radiator survived. The sunroof's glass was sucked into the car, dripping into a perfect orb the size of a basketball. Investigators found it the next day in the rubble, along with the charred remains of Steve, Andrea and Keith. Steve and Andrea's bodies were intact. But their faces were gone.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LIKE MOST OF the guys who spent their nights blowing off steam at the Station, Steve Mancini lived his whole life in

Rhode Island's Pawtuxet Valley, just outside of Providence. His family had been there for two generations, among the thousands of Italian immigrants who settled there in the 1920s to work at textile mills like Consolidated Textiles, the manufacturers of Fruit of the Loom. The mills have been closed since the '60s — only one, a factory that makes Ivory and Lever soap, is still active — but to this day, the gloomy granite structures loom behind the rows of dingy apartment houses on the winding streets, casting long shadows.

These days, there are a lot more black and Hispanic faces in the Valley, but nearly every local business still seems to bear an Italian name, like Borelli's minimart or Anthony's Cucina, Steve's favorite restaurant for Sunday all-you-can-eat chicken dinner.

Steve and Andrea lived a couple of blocks away in a tidy green-gray house. The house belongs to Steve's parents, who built a second-story addition for the new couple. The four were close; they had all planned to drive down to Disney

Some people's skin hung off their bodies like strips of tissue paper.

★

World for a group vacation the week after the fire.

"We were always doing something," says Steve's mother, Barbara Magness. "Now the house is very quiet."

It's lightly snowing a few days after Barbara and her husband buried Steve and Andrea in plots they had reserved for themselves. They're sipping tea at their kitchen table.

With her blond hair hanging just below her shoulders and her carefully applied red lipstick, Barbara appears younger than her 60 years. Her husband, Doug Magness, Steve's stepfather, is a heavy-equipment mechanic who shares her trusting, kindly air. (Barbara and Steve's father split up when he was 6.) Like Steve, Doug liked messing around on the guitar. In 1976, he took Steve to his first rock show: Black Sabbath, with Kiss opening.

"We were there for Ozzy Osbourne," Doug says, his large blue eyes lighting up at the memory. "But then Kiss came out, and we couldn't believe our eyes. It wasn't like anything we'd ever seen."

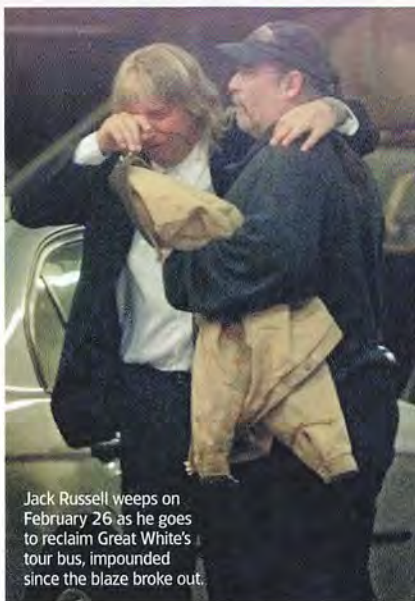
Steve always had girlfriends but had never seriously considered marriage before meeting Andrea, the ninth of 11 children from a conservative Italian family in town. "That was Andrea's dream: to marry Steve and have kids," says her cousin, Alesha Jacavone. Whenever he played a show, he would always sing the song he wrote for Andrea, "A.J.'s Song"; if she had downed a few shots by then, she'd sing along.

The snow keeps falling as Barbara clears away the teacups. The room is full of flowers from the wake. Andrea's family even had a guitar-shaped floral arrangement made; the family plans to dry it out for a year and then encase it in glass. They've received piles of condolence cards. There's a letter from a high-school friend of Steve's, one of the people who used to hang out with him in the parking lot of Our Lady of Grace, a local church. She writes about listening to Steve sing Bad Company's "Seagull," a haunting guitar ballad in the vein of "Freebird":

"I was on my way to work this past week and I had the radio on and what came on: that song. I blasted the radio as loud as it could go, and just sang and cried. That song reminded me until this



Tom Conte at his parents' home in West Warwick



Jack Russell weeps on February 26 as he goes to reclaim Great White's tour bus, impounded since the blaze broke out.

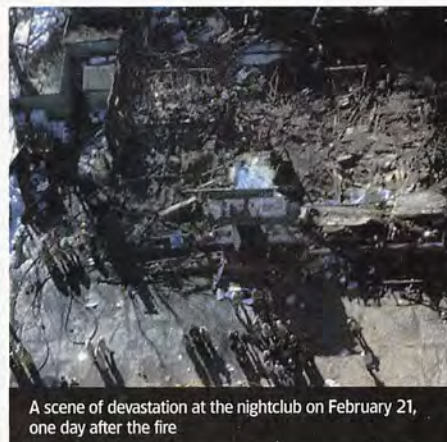
day of Steve and fun times hanging out, being young, laughing and singing. I will never forget him. I know he is singing with the angels."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THURSDAY WAS the night Fathead would practice, in Al Prudhomme's basement in nearby Coventry. Andrea and the

Steve and Andrea Mancini's bodies were intact. But their faces were gone.

★



A scene of devastation at the nightclub on February 21, one day after the fire

other band members' wives and girlfriends would go to the Station, and they'd all meet up to play pool later.

This Thursday, however, Tom Conte is at home, sitting in his bedroom in the ranch house where he lives with his parents. Every inch of the room is decorated with posters and rock memorabilia — on the wall next to his closet he has nailed action figures of all four members of Kiss, still in their boxes. The room is dominated by a king-size waterbed, which undulates every time he moves.

He thumbs through his green scrapbook: pages and pages of band stickers (Ratt's 1989 tour, Twisted Sister's in 1986), a photo of him with Warrant's Jani Lane, guitar picks from Extreme's Nuno Bettencourt and Dokken's George Lynch, a Fathead poster from a show they played at the Station last year with Quiet Riot. The last page holds a ticket stub from the Great White show. →



Conte is talking about Steve, whom he considered his "big brother," and about the band, how badly they wanted to make it. They had bought a Tascam digital recorder to cut a CD, but when they added the echo, all the sound erased.

"It might sound childish or corny, but everything has changed in my life now," he says, staring down at his bedroom carpet. "The world as I knew it is over."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THURSDAY IS ALSO the day on which the Station burned down, and the gang that used to hang out there has been getting together every week since in remembrance. They meet at the Cowesett Inn, a restaurant across the street from the Station, which is now nothing more than a large crater. Only the drum riser is left standing, surrounded by a chain-link fence on which people have stuck flowers, teddy bears, crosses, shot glasses and Poison eight-tracks.

"I'm not saying goodbye," says Mark Campopiano, a friend of Steve's from the Stop & Shop supermarket where they worked. "I don't believe in that at all — that goodbye is final. I think Steve is still here, somewhere, having a good laugh at all of us."

At the Cowesett Inn, there's a lot of talk about what transpired in the fire and who is to blame, the same conversation everyone has been having since the nightmare happened. About 20 people have gathered today — the woman who passed around kamikaze shots that night is here, as is the brother of another bouncer who perished.

In a voice choked with grief, Kevin Beese, the Station's manager, keeps repeating that no one from Great White mentioned anything about pyrotechnics



"It was his pride": Steve Mancini's guitar, recovered from the ruins

to him. His wife, Belinda, whose father is in Dirty Deeds, an AC/DC cover band that Steve loved, nods in agreement. People examine their lottery tickets when the winning numbers come up on the television, and they talk about getting Station tattoos. There's occasional laughter, but the mood is grim.

"Sometimes, you know, at work, if we have only one machine going, I have a lot of time to think," says Mike Kaczmarczyk, who's drinking a Coors Light. He works seasonally, making lawn-care machinery.

"Normally, I'd think about my golf game or what show I'm going to see this weekend, but now all I can see is that pileup of bodies. The other day, I don't

know where it came from, but I suddenly had this vision. It stopped me right in my tracks. I saw someone I knew at the bottom of that pile of bodies. It was me."

For Steve's parents, some consolation came at Keith Mancini's wake: An old friend had heard that officials might have found Steve's guitar. The Magnesses went to the police station, and sure enough, there was his black acoustic Yamaha. "I believe in signs," Barbara says. "And this felt like a sign: He was saying that we shouldn't worry about him."

The back of the guitar is gone, as are the tuning keys, and the strings hang loose, jutting out this way and that. There are only a few illegible signatures left, and one band name, Anthrax. His stepfather holds the guitar, two wrecked pieces of wood that smell faintly of smoke, and looks down at it solemnly.

"This," Doug Magness says, "was Steve's pride." He gazes at it for another minute, and then goes down to the basement to put the guitar away. [BLENDER]

"It might sound corny, but everything has changed in my life now."

★

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WHEN PRODUCERS GO CRAZY!

TAPED HIS DOGS!

BRIAN WILSON

Surf-pop genius. Fruitcake

PRODUCED The Beach Boys, the Honeys, Glen Campbell, Gary Usher, himself

THE METHOD Tormented by the greatness of Beethoven but influenced by Phil Spector, Beach Boys leader Wilson created music nobody had ever heard within the context of a pop song. He was frequently inspired: Recording at home in Bel-Air, California, which had no echo chamber, he placed microphones in his empty swimming pool. Deaf in one ear, he mixed in mono. "He knew every instrument he wanted to hear and how he wanted to hear it," Chuck Britz, his engineer, once noted.

<< Phil Spector and his firearms, Brian Wilson and his sand pit: From the notoriously "sensitive" to the downright bananas, record producers have always been a bit unpredictable. But who's the king of the studio psychos? Find out with this handy *Blender* guide . . .

BY JOHN AIZLEWOOD



> Brian Wilson couldn't handle his gifts. A drug habit the size of the Pacific Ocean didn't help, either.

Brian Wilson:
"I think there's
something wrong
with this phone."

THE MADNESS In 1964, Wilson had a breakdown on a flight to Houston. He then retired from touring to concentrate on songwriting and producing.

He demanded perfection — at the time, “Good Vibrations” was the most expensive single ever recorded — but he simply couldn’t handle his gifts. A drug habit the size of the Pacific Ocean didn’t help, either.

He recorded in a sand pit to establish the authentic “Beach Boys feel” on the aborted album *Smile*. For a time, he refused to enter the studio, so one was brought to him. He once recorded his dogs (they used the sand pit as a toilet), and he wore a fireman’s helmet after blaming himself for a conflagration that started while he was producing a song called “Fire.”

While still a major producer, he worked part-time at the Radiant Radish food store in Bel-Air, often in his pajamas. Diagnosed as schizophrenic, he once spent three months in a padded cell. Two planned records — something called the “fitness album” and one made up entirely of water sounds — never happened.

MUST-HEAR The Beach Boys, *Pet Sounds* (CAPITOL, 1966)



LEE “SCRATCH” PERRY

Invented reggae. Buried TV sets

PRODUCED Bob Marley & the Wailers, the Congos, the Clash, himself

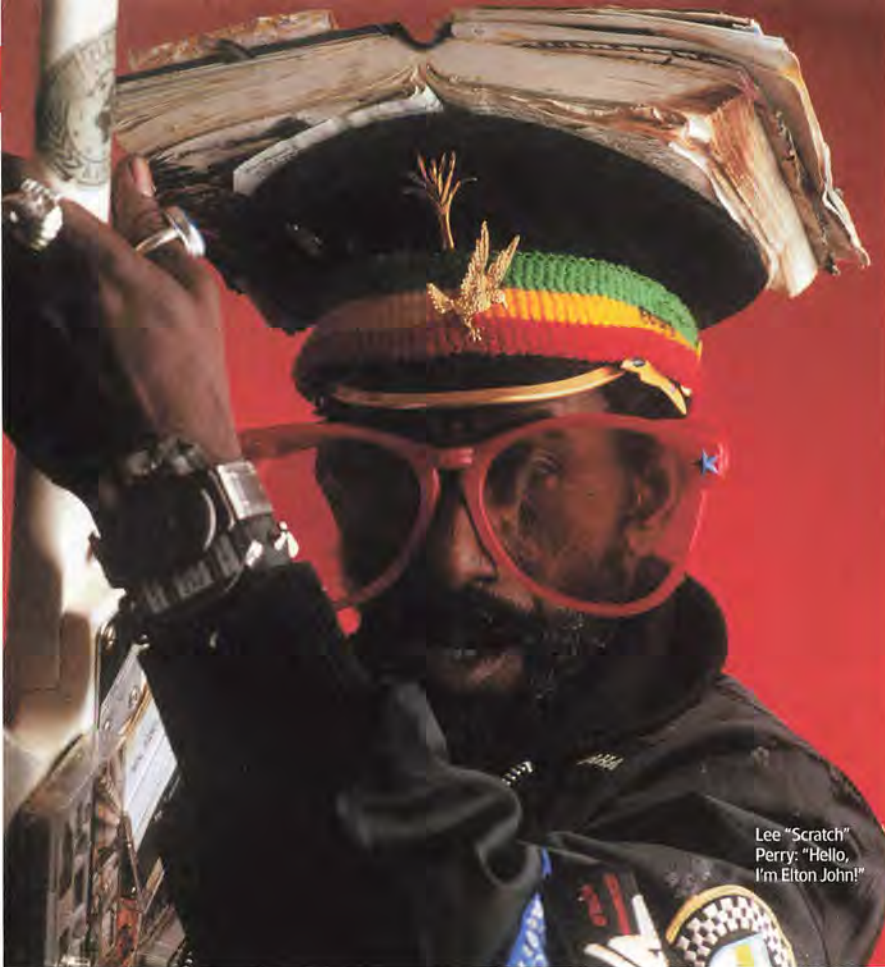
THE METHOD Perry invented reggae when he created a new beat, slower than ska and rock-steady, for the Pioneers’ “Long Shot” in 1967. At his Black Ark studio, he sampled before samplers existed and created sounds unlike anyone else’s.

“He seemed to get 16 tracks stuffed into that four-track,” said reggae star and collaborator Max Romeo.

“It was only a four-track,” Perry recalled. “But I was also picking up 20 from the extraterrestrial squad. I am the dub shepherd.”

THE MADNESS Perry had long harbored eccentricities: Determined to record the authentic sound of Africa, he once miked up a palm tree; his recordings under his alter egos the Upsetter and Super Ape were strange and sinister.

In 1979, under heavy pressure from the Spanglers, a group of protection racketeers in Kingston, Jamaica, he began consuming truckloads of industrial-strength marijuana and, it was rumored, LSD and cocaine — all washed down with rum, Tia Maria and tape head-cleaning



Lee “Scratch” Perry: “Hello, I’m Elton John!”

Lee Perry walked backward around Kingston, hitting the sidewalk with a hammer.



fluid. At one point, he was spotted walking backward around the streets of Kingston, hitting the sidewalk with a hammer and muttering that Satan dwelled at Black Ark.

Perry then covered Black Ark in mystic graffiti. It later burned down. The police detained him on suspicion of arson, but he was released without being charged. Later, as a houseguest of producer Adrian Sherwood, Perry buried his host’s TV set in the garden.

MUST-HEAR Various Artists, *Arkology: The Lee “Scratch” Perry Anthology* (ISLAND JAMAICA, 1997)



JOE MEEK

Pop pioneer. Schizo murder-suicide

PRODUCED The Tornados, the Honeycombs, Screaming Lord Sutch, Tom Jones, John Leyton

THE METHOD Robert George “Joe” Meek worked from a tiny studio in one room over his apartment in London. He invented atmosphere — echoes, sped-up tapes, reverb — and used it on such records as “Telstar,” the Tornados’ 1963 worldwide instrumental hit.

THE MADNESS He feared being

SHOT HIS LANDLADY!

outed as gay, particularly after he was arrested for “cottaging” in a public toilet.

After a handful of early hits, his penchant for a gimmick finished him. His violent temper drove away many of his friends, while cocaine and LSD made him supremely paranoid. He developed “nice” and “nasty”

personalities, known respectively as Joe and Robert. In February 1967, after an all-night recording session, he shot his landlady and then turned the gun on himself.

MUST-HEAR Various Artists, *It’s Hard to Believe It: The Amazing World of Joe Meek* (RAZOR & TIE, 1995)





Phil Spector shows Blondie his huge imaginary machine gun.

PHIL SPECTOR

Teen-pop wizard. Reclusive gun nut

PRODUCED Ike & Tina Turner, Leonard Cohen, the Ramones, the Crystals, the Beatles, John Lennon, Starsailor

THE METHOD A songwriter, musician and producer, Spector created the famous Wall of Sound: orchestration, echo and swirling choruses that turned ordinary tales of teenage love into orgasmic symphonies. He founded the Phillies label in New York in 1961 and had runaway success, making his first million before he was 21.

He began producing the Beatles at John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr's behest — earning him Paul

Phil Spector began to carry a pistol into the studio. He frequently fired it.



McCartney's long-term distrust. Oddly, Lennon forgave him for secretly putting violins on "Instant Karma!" despite being ordered not to.

THE MADNESS At first, Spector was simply meticulous — then he became obsessive. He once reportedly listened to a single note for 12 hours. In the late '60s, he became an increasingly reclusive, autocratic control freak who refused to let his wife, Ronnie, drive through Los

JIM STEINMAN

Meat Loaf Svengali. Restaurant glutton

PRODUCED Barbra Streisand, Céline Dion, Bonnie Tyler, Air Supply, Meat Loaf (but not *Bat Out of Hell*, which he wrote but didn't produce)

THE METHOD The classically trained Steinman reportedly uses several studios at once just for remixing. Very meticulous, especially on his own songs, which offer the bombast of opera, the spirit of a Broadway musical and his own cutting sense of humor.

THE MADNESS Equal parts megalomaniac and visionary: "Jim wants everything all the time," explained Todd

WANTS IT ALL!

Rundgren, the producer of *Bat Out of Hell*. Steinman tests his songs by lighting a joint and then listening to them on a brand of speaker whose entire inventory he bought just before the maker went under.

His songs are long and complex, and he showers them with choruses, effects and anything that makes them louder, longer and better. He lives his life this way, too, and has been known to order "everything" on a restaurant menu. Revels in the fact that many call him a genius.

Was last seen shouting "It's my baby! You're butchering my baby!" when asked to chop 32 seconds off Meat Loaf's "I'd Do Anything for Love (But I Won't Do That)."

MUST-HEAR Pandora's Box, *Original Sin* (EMI, 1989)



Angeles alone unless she had a life-size replica of him in the passenger's seat.

He began to carry a pistol at all times, even in the studio, and frequently fired it. After Spector shot into the roof of the Record Plant in Los Angeles, Lennon said, "If you're gonna kill me, Phil, kill me, but don't fuck with my ears — I need them." He once forced the Ramones to record at gunpoint, and he reportedly threatened Leonard Cohen as well.

He took Cohen's tapes home each night with an armed guard, possibly hoping to repeat his experience with the tapes of Lennon's *Rock & Roll*, which he auctioned for \$94,000. Increasingly erratic, through the '80s and '90s he worked less and less. This February, he was arrested in connection with the murder of actress Lana Clarkson.

MUST-HEAR Various Artists, *Phil Spector: Back to Mono* (1958–1969) (ABKCO, 1991)



MICHAEL BEINHORN

Control freak. Gear geek

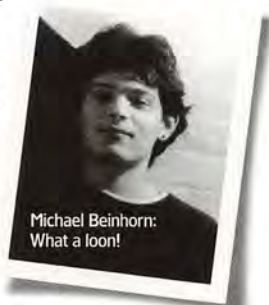
PRODUCED Red Hot Chili Peppers, Korn, Soul Asylum, Soundgarden, Ozzy Osbourne, Hole

THE METHOD Baby-faced tech nerd who helped create a new process called Ultra-Analog — something to do with the speed of the tape, which suits the hard-rockers Beinhorn typically works with. He's a tyrant in the studio, firm about schedules and thoroughness. He is the anti-slacker.

THE MADNESS A "method" producer — the Red Hot Chili Peppers' Anthony Kiedis was surprised to find that Beinhorn had moved to his block when they were working together. He has spent millions on nü-metal bands — \$4 million alone on Korn's doomed *Untouchables*.

He is obsessively perfectionist. Recording Hole's *Celebrity Skin*, he once spent a week tuning Melissa Auf Der Maur's bass. "I have no idea what he did with my \$3.2 million," said Courtney Love afterward, "but I still like him." His pep talks are legendary. "Don't think you're here simply to make a record," he told the Peppers before they began 1989's *Mother's Milk*. "You're here to fight a war."

MUST-HEAR Soundgarden, *Superunknown* (A&M, 1994) [BLENDER]



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ALL HAIL THE NEW...

King and Queen

Jack White was just about to fall into Meg's trap: bishop to knight 6. Bah!



of Rock!

After six years and three wildly acclaimed albums of primitive, punk-blues mash-up, Detroit's White Stripes finally have the world at their feet. Trouble is, do our cult heroes really want it? "I'm scared," admits bandleader Jack White, "to enjoy what we do."

BY ANDREW PERRY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANKIN

JACK WHITE DOESN'T own a cellphone. It's just one of many trappings of the early twenty-first century — like, say, nü-metal, 64-track studios and bass players — that the 27-year-old White Stripes frontman does not endorse.

Perhaps because of his failure to embrace modern telecommunications, he has developed an uncanny sense of timing. With a few hours to kill before our scheduled interview, *Blender* steps out of its Detroit hotel to take in the brisk Michigan mid-winter air, only to find White waiting on the doorstep, car keys in his hand.

"You want to go record shopping," he says, insistently.

In White's grimy eight-seat van — which served as the White Stripes' bus on their most recent U.S. tour — we roar across Detroit toward the Record Graveyard in Hamtramck, a Motor City enclave. Blues legend Robert Johnson booms out as loud as the speakers — and the spidery 1930s recordings — will allow. White cuts off a police car and observes with a laugh that he doesn't have a driver's license.

He has no red-and-white wardrobe today. White is off-duty: jeans, U.S. Navy pea coat and velvet cap, matched with a rather unhealthy complexion. He is wearing makeup — white foundation and powder on his cheeks, and deep red coloring around his eyes. He looks like an undead dandy, come to haunt us from the nineteenth century.

At the Graveyard — a recently opened store with racks of vinyl disappearing into the distance — White quickly amasses a huge pile of albums: dusty relics by Hank Williams, Jelly Roll Morton and Loretta Lynn — a favorite of White's partner in the band, drummer Meg White. The most recent selection he finds is Deep Purple's 1972 classic *Machine Head*. "Fantastic!" he exclaims. "Me and my roommate were just saying that we needed some Deep Purple on vinyl."

Afterward, we drive to a pub-style restaurant opposite Detroit's main concert hall, where White orders a White Russian and begins chain-smoking his way through a pack of cigarettes. He quivers with nervous energy. He's worried about the reaction to the much-anticipated new White Stripes CD, *Elephant*. He has spent the last month telling the press it's all about long-lost ideas of romance and gentility, of "the death of the sweetheart." →

going on with all this attention," he says obliquely. He fiddles manically with his pack of Camels. "I don't want to be satisfied. I'm so scared to enjoy anything about what we do. It's not like a Kurt Cobain thing, where I hate fame. But when your idols are telling you that they love what you're doing — like, Bob Dylan sent down word that he's a fan — what do you do with *that*?" He pauses desperately. "It's really hard to understand what you should think about that sort of thing."

Like Cobain, White is also experiencing that uneasy transition from speaking to a small crowd of dedicated fans to a global audience. He says he intended the band to appeal to a limited base — and he liked it that way.

"People who don't know much about us," he says, "always ask, 'So, are you gonna get a bass player?' It's like, 'Why do you want that from us? I know you're not asking the Strokes when they're getting a violin player.' But these 'novelty' ideas are what weeds out those who don't want to dig deeper. If you can't see past that, then fine, go away! Don't even bother with us."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEG WHITE IS a year older than Jack, and nowhere near as prickly. In the past, she has seemed enigmatic — a benign but mostly silent partner in interviews in which Jack lets loose torrents of ideas. She hardly ever agrees to be interviewed alone. But tonight, after Jack's record-shopping expedition, is an exception.

Taking a seat in Small Plates — one of downtown Detroit's few classy restaurants — Meg wears a suede patchwork poncho in the band's colors; her dyed-black hair is longer than it has been recently. But her most noticeable fashion accessory is the plaster cast on her right arm. Last weekend, she was in New York with current boyfriend Oliver Henry's band, the Soledad Brothers, when she slipped on ice and suffered a double fracture of her wrist.

Meg will barely be out of the cast when the White Stripes' world tour is scheduled to start in six weeks. This isn't good news: Both Jack and Meg had been excitedly counting the days until they'd be back on the road. She's reserved but still chirpy — enjoying the heady combination of a Maker's Mark on the rocks, painkillers and other medication for a gastric-flu bug. In fact, the angst Jack feels over the band's success doesn't seem to be touching Meg at all.

"I have a little more freedom to enjoy it than he does," she says matter-of-factly. "I don't have as much to do. It can either

The White Stripes' bassist makes a rare appearance.



be really amazing for you if everything's going right, or it can be just the worst torture if you don't have that feeling. I do enjoy a lot of it. It still hasn't hit me, really, and," she says with a smile, "it's far better that it doesn't. In 20 years, I'll wake up and go, 'Wait a minute — that was cool. . . .'"

Has it put any strain on their relationship? "You want to be focused on the music, not all that," she says. "I think it takes all the mystery out of it. Bob Dylan? I don't want to know anything. I don't want him to go down from where he is."

What is going on between Jack and Meg? Are they married? Are they brother and sister? "It doesn't matter," Jack is

fond of saying. "We never really cared to begin with." Whatever the reality, the story seems to become more baffling with time — his habit of referring to her onstage as "my big sister" was undone first by the discovery of the couple's 1996 marriage license and then their divorce papers. Recently, they've even suggested that they might be cousins.

What now seems certain is that they were married before starting the band in 1997. Jack took Meg's surname — his real last name is Gillis. One Detroit scenester remembers the couple, in the band's early days, →

"Meg is the most important part of the White Stripes."



Meg White eats her own words — literally!

SHIRT BY KATY KOPP

as a regular fixture at the Gold Dollar, the city's former garage nexus, which has since closed. Jack had all his hair shaved off on one side of his head, with the rest swept up into a bright pink steeple.

"They'd sit side by side at the bar," the scenester says, "and you could see these waves of ambition radiating off him."

Jack and Meg's marriage fell apart, but they kept the band together. Since then, almost every element of their biographies has been reshaped to maintain the facade of the brother-sister act. The details can vary from day to day: Jack has claimed that he and Meg were the last two of 10 children; sometimes he says eight. The couple seem to have fun extending the untruths.

Jack grew up in the lower-middle-class Hispanic district of southwest Detroit known as Mexicantown. Meg is from nearby. At school, most of the other kids were black or Hispanic and into house and hip-hop. Jack hated the music, which meant he didn't have many friends. Two or three of his older brothers liked rock & roll, but not the same sort of rock he did.

When his parents and siblings moved out of the family home to the suburbs, Jack and Meg moved in. Meg says she came home one night from her job at a bar in the northern Detroit suburb of Royal Oak to find Jack practicing his songs in the attic. Instead of going downstairs, she sat down behind Jack's drum kit and started bashing along. Her know-nothing drumming style was just what he had been looking for: the foil for his increasing virtuosity.



The White Stripes last May: My, how they've changed!

At the time, Jack was running his own upholstery firm, called Third Man. YOUR FURNITURE IS NOT DEAD, his business card proclaimed. Jack served his soft-furnishings apprenticeship in the early '90s with Brian Muldoon, who still runs an upholstery business out of his backyard in downtown Detroit. At the end of *Blender's* first interview, Jack suggests we visit Muldoon — very surprising for a man so guarded about his past. "No one's ever spoken to him before," he says.

Muldoon, it turns out, is expecting us. His house is a beautifully restored Victorian. "I did it all myself," he says proudly. The living room is littered with children's toys. Now 44, Muldoon is nicely dressed and sports a trim goatee. He's wearing a

beret. Having introduced us, Jack makes his excuses and promptly leaves.

Brian Muldoon gave Jack his rock education, playing him music while they worked together — and spinning misty-eyed yarns about the Ramones and the Stooges. Muldoon played the drums. Inspired by the bassless lineup of a then-popular garage group, the Flat Duo Jets, he and Jack began rehearsing in his workshop after hours. In tribute to one of the principal tools of their trade, they called themselves Two-Part Resin.

Muldoon still has four hours of their recordings. "Wanna hear some?" he asks, leaving the room to fetch a shoebox filled with CDs. Much of what he plays sounds just like the White Stripes. There are familiar covers and early versions of Stripes songs "The Union Forever" and "Lafayette Blues." "He was never really critical," Muldoon says, "except that he wanted me to beat the crap out of the snare drum."

As Jack's musical exploration ventured further into the past, it began to conflict with Muldoon's punk aesthetic. Muldoon plays a recording of the two of them covering Bob Dylan's "Girl From the North Country" on which he's all but refusing to drum. "It was the only time we ever played this," he says. "He never brought it up again."

"Jack's the performer," he adds. "I was never really wild about it. It's a natural extension for him — he's meant to be doing what he's doing. . . . The difficult part was when it broke up."

There's an awkward pause. Muldoon is referring to Jack and Meg's marriage,

ASK THE EXPERTS!

"FIRE AND RAGE!"



A crack team of color experts analyze Jack and Meg White's primal color code

BY BEN KAPLAN

"ATTENTION-GRABBING"



"These are winter colors, strong and contrasting. They show a tendency toward risky behavior. It's attention-grabbing to the point where you wonder if the White Stripes aren't compensating. These colors could say, 'I don't want people to think that I'm shy.'"

Susan Mullen, consultant for Color Me Beautiful, a cosmetics company that sells lip gloss and eye shadow that aim to achieve "color harmony" with your "seasonal skin tones"

"DEVILISH"



"The White Stripes create a powerfully intense, almost devilish ideal, conjuring both fire and rage."

Stephen Quiller, author of *Color Choices: Making Sense Out of Color Theory* and *Painter's Guide to Color*



"STANDOUT"



"They stand out from the stinking mass of humanity. By taking themselves seriously, they show that they don't take themselves seriously at all. First-year art students must really dig this."

Simon Doonan, creative director of Barneys department store and author of *Wacky Chicks: Life Lessons From Fearlessly Inappropriate and Fabulously Eccentric Women*

"TERRIFIC"



"From the Beatles' haircuts to Bob Dylan's Cherokee hat to Boy George in drag, creating a physical presence about yourself, a physical logo, is terrific."

George Lois, former adman and *Esquire* art director. His new book, *Sleighbelly*, came out in March

"FEMININELY CHARGED"



"Black is the absence of color, white is color's presence and red is passionate, exciting and sensual. The contrast is sexy and femininely charged."

Becky Raich, senior color marketing and design consultant for paint manufacturer Sherwin Williams

Yes, it's sad when animals die, but *MAN* MUST EAT!

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which, of course, never happened, because they're brother and sister. Right?

"Well," he says, "I don't think anyone's denying they were married anymore. They both had a tough decision to make, especially Meg, but they made the right decision. Look at them now."

WITH JACK WHITE singing, writing and playing guitar, it's easy to suppose that Meg is just along for the ride and that Jack is the one with all the talent. But Jack says that without her drumming, the White Stripes wouldn't work. "Meg," he says, "is the most important part of the band."

Jack loves the blues. He could always play them at home, by himself. But for a long time, he was worried about how he could possibly play them with any conviction in front of an audience. He hardly had a traditional pedigree for a renowned

"Meg and I aren't best friends or anything. We never have been."

★

bluesman: "We were white and born in the '70s in Detroit. . . I didn't want people to take it the wrong way."

Meg's drumming style — "the complete primitiveness," Jack says — gave the White Stripes a way in. He says the childishness of the band's approach — the primary colors, the simplicity of the setup, but most of all, Meg's drumming — packaged the White Stripes' take on the blues with a set of readymade excuses for anyone who would question their authenticity.

"It was a box that gave all of the disclaimers on the outside," he says. "'We're just kids; we don't know any better.'"

Whatever the effects of their mounting fame, Jack says it hasn't changed his relationship with Meg — whatever it is. "People don't really ask us about it too much anymore," he says. "Meg and I have always gotten along."

Then, finally, he says something that casts light on the way the former spouses get along: When they're not playing, they spend as little time together as possible.

"We're not the best of friends or anything," he says. "We never really have been. We work well together when we write songs. If it was me and another guy in the band, it would not work. I don't want to ruin the relationship we have onstage by hanging out with her the whole time. Because I'm scared about it. I don't want it to die."

Last year, Jack hinted that the White Stripes would make only one or two more albums and then split up. When *Blender* asks Meg about this, though, she is, characteristically, more optimistic. "In 10 years," she says, "for us still to be up onstage, still singing stuff wearing red and white — it's not going to be relevant. We'll know exactly when that's over — when we're repeating ourselves, or when it's just not there anymore." She smiles. "We'll know." [BLENDER]

"Hey, look at the boob reading this article."

Rankin (2)

CATCH A RISING STAR

IN A FOOD AND
ENTERTAINMENT UNIVERSE

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112
MADONNA

Her last film was *Swept Away* — literally. This CD's better
★★★



120
GODSMACK

Unhappy Ozzfest band gets stuck in the mud
★★



134
SLY STONE

The prime of a hatted, sideburned '60s funk marvel
★★★★

The Guide



THEY MAKE 'EM. WE REVIEW 'EM >>

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50 CENT

Gangsta's new gold medalist fires shots in a hometown concert, p144

Cut the Crap

Newly ascetic, Madonna renounces scandal for harsh electronica and soy lattes



BECAUSE SHE'S AS narcissistic as she is fascinated by the power of photography, Madonna has used her album covers for an extraordinary series of portraits that chronicle her self-imagined evolution: the clubland bride reclining on satin pillows from *Like a Virgin* (provocative); the faceless, unsnapped-jeans waist-land from *Like a Prayer* (lean, serious); the cowgirl makeover from *Music* (garish).

Now, on the cover of her new album, *American Life*, the gaucho is reborn as a guerrilla, with her familiar face scrambled and topped with a beret so she resembles Che Guevara, the '60s Marxist warrior. How many young fans will wonder why she's ripping off Rage Against the Machine's logo?

Many of Madonna's albums have been extraordinary, too, but they're not nearly so unpredictable — our most ambitious pop star is also one of our least ambitious singers. Since her first single, in 1982, she has found collaborators who can hook deceptively simple songs to tricky dance tracks — and lately, abandoning her New York club roots, she has cast a curatorial eye on not-quite-mainstream European electronica producers.

In 1998, she teamed with William Orbit for *Ray of Light*, a lush fantasy of spiritual fulfillment. Then she turned to Mirwais, the

MADONNA AMERICAN LIFE

☆☆☆

MAVERICK/
WARNER BROS.

radical French tinkerer, who cherishes anxiety the way Orbit cherishes bliss. Together, they made *Music*, a fitful, fidgety album that celebrates incoherence. A disco cowgirl sings a techno song about how "music makes the bourgeoisie and the rebel . . ." She never finished the thought, which suggests she hadn't bought that beret yet.

Mirwais is back for *American Life*, which is just as disjointed as *Music* and much more severe. Many of the songs start with a wisp of electric guitar and then a violent stutter or hiccup as the beat comes in, cutting Madonna's voice to ribbons. On "Nobody Knows Me," she delivers a series of rhyming complaints ("I'm not that kind of guy/Sometimes I feel shy"; "It's no good/When you're misunderstood") and these empty phrases make sense — not because they tell us anything about Madonna, but because the bass line is as acerbic, and the beat as petulant, as the album's sulky title.

That's both the best and the worst thing about this album: The music is much more eloquent than the lyrics. In "Die Another Day," the title theme from the latest James Bond movie, she whispers, "Sigmund Freud, analyze this," and it's hard not to think of Billy Crystal and Robert De Niro. But then there's the gospel choir in "Nothing Fails": It's a "Like a Prayer" rip-off,

but the result is glorious, the same as the first time she did it. Mirwais himself adds delicate backing vocals to "Love Profusion," delivering the most memorable line: "Aaaaah."

For a long time, it was impossible to hear Madonna without thinking about her life. Each new interview or video encouraged listeners to scrutinize her albums for clues. She was unsolvable: a human acrostic. These days, though, her life seems less puzzling than ever. It's hard to be curious about her marriage to director Guy Ritchie, her time in England, her forty-fourth birthday, her dedication to her two children or her love of yoga (or is it Pilates?). Without a compelling back story, her songs seem diminished.

Madonna confronts this problem in the title track, which is the first single. "I live the American dream," she sings, inviting listeners to speculate about her new life in England. But even she seems bored by the topic. She may never live down the ridiculous rap section that begins, "I'm drinking a soy latte/I get a double shot-tay." And it's depressing to hear a brilliant media manipulator declare, "I've just realized that nothing is what it seems," especially since she used that line in a magazine interview last year.

If this is a holding pattern, it's a seductive one. Though it's harder to love Madonna, it's easy to admire her achievements: Her albums are no longer guaranteed blockbusters (and her movies are still guaranteed bombs), but she has disproved skeptics who said her music was secondary to her media tricks.

The album ends with "Easy Ride," a gorgeous ode to banality. As the string section swells, Madonna keeps repeating a chorus that's somewhere between a playground chant and a Zen koan: "I go round and round just like a circle." She sings it as if that's something to be proud of, and who knows? Maybe it is. **KELEFA SANNIEN**

MADONNA Her greatest CDs →

MADONNA

WARNER BROS., 1983

☆☆☆☆

The blueprint: Her debut alternates return-of-disco beats ("Burning Up") and desirous pleas (the bitter-sweet "Borderline"). "I'm not the same; I have no shame," she warns. Then she proved it.



THE IMMACULATE COLLECTION

WARNER BROS., 1990

☆☆☆☆

Seventeen deceptively simple hits about desire, freedom, morality and hot grooves, each of which she cherishes. "Material Girl" got her unfairly tagged as shallow, and "Like a Virgin" declared her sensual optimism. As pop hits compilations go, it's a better record than the Beatles' 1.

EROTICA

MAVERICK/WARNER BROS., 1992

☆☆☆☆

The toe-sucking album: An endlessly rich NC-17 rhapsody on kink. Give her oral sex ("Where Life Begins") and she's ecstatic ("Deeper and Deeper"); neglect her ("Bye Bye Baby") and she'll cheat on you ("Bad Girl").



MUSIC

MAVERICK/WARNER BROS., 2000

☆☆☆☆

The backlash to her spiritual period spews renewed excitement: "I like to sing, sing, sing/Like a bird on a wingy, wingy, wingy" is awfully silly-illy-illy. Producer Mirwais Ahmadzaï confirms his role as Maddy's sonic yogi. And "Don't Tell Me" could be her stubborn superstar epitaph. **ROB TANNENBAUM**

A full-page photograph of Madonna in a prison cell. She is sitting on a toilet, wearing a black tank top, camouflage pants, and long black leather gloves. Her arms are raised, holding onto the top of the cell door. She has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera. The cell walls are made of light-colored wood paneling.

> Madonna has disproved skeptics who said her music was secondary to her media tricks.

Madonna prepares to go ballistic on the guy who used all the Charmin.

ADULT.

ANXIETY ALWAYS ★★★

ERSATZ AUDIO

Detroit electro-punks get down and boogie. Sarcastically, of course

A duo of self-conscious fashionistas, Adult. take silliness seriously — the period they place after their name is just the tip of the pretension iceberg. On the 2001 singles compilation *Resuscitation*, Adult. were even more tongue-in-chic than effete electropop peers Ladytron and Fischerspooner. On their first album of all-new material,

pouty frontwoman Nicola Kuperus sings "Glue Your Eyelids Together" above a beat ripped off from early Depeche Mode. Then she dreams of being the only person at a party over a Casio riff no one but German beatbox minimalists Trio could envy. It's almost as much fun as 1981! The songs attempt to expose the fear lurking under the surface of ordinary life, while Kuperus and Adam Lee Miller's goofy, Kraftwerk-issued anti-hooks make it too easy to celebrate the alienation they satirize.

JAMES HANNAHAM

ARAB STRAP

MONDAY AT THE HUG & PINT ★★★

MATADOR

Confessional Scottish duo returns with less bellyaching and bodily fluids

With each album, Scotland's glummost bedroom balladeers sound less like drunken pornographers and more like, well, musicians. Aidan Moffat's sleepy speak-singing remains booze-soaked and frequently indecipherable, but where early Arab Strap records (this is their fifth studio LP) often left that burr overexposed, this one drapes it in a forest of strings and mellow beats. When it's possible to make out the lyrics, he's not as uniformly bitter as fans assume: On "The Shy Retirer" he woos a

lass by croaking, "You know I'm always moanin'/But you jump-start my serotonin." His monotone is offset by colorful arrangements — pounding tribal drums and staticky guitar open "Fucking Little Bastards"; an unexpected *bum-bum-bumadum* drum machine bounces "Flirt" into high gear; and a lovely muted trumpet flutters down to keep the singer company in the closing moments. Pretty refined for a band named after a sex toy.

JOHN DEFORE

A.R.E. WEAPONS

A.R.E. WEAPONS ★★★

ROUGH TRADE

"Get down, make war" is the rallying cry for these tech-punks

Scruffy, rail-thin and seemingly unbathed, these downtown New York fixtures are cooler-than-thou exemplars of today's art-damaged indie mentality. Soldering crude electronics onto roaring avant-rock muscle, Brain, Matt and Paul (who's the DJ brother of it-girl actress Chloë Sevigny) fuse the rebellious beatboxes of synth-punkers Suicide with the urban-honky aggro of noise revolutionaries the MC5. Their ironic boasts on the mic evoke the younger, louder, snottier Beastie Boys: "People talk shit, people talk trash/When people talk about me, I just have to laugh."



Arab Strap's housewarming party did not go as planned.

Brain sneers on "Headbanger Face." The music is sexy in the dirtiest possible way, which makes up for the band's stooped posing, and the anthemic, scream-along urgency finally brings out the "clash" in the otherwise ho-hum "electroclash" movement.

MATT DIEHL

AUDIO BULLYS

EGO WAR ★★★

ASTRALWERKS

Bass-heavy London duo: the possible "new Chemical Brothers"

Like their music, the Audio Bullies' name has attitude — suggesting the British

THE SCORE >>

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK

BRIGHTLY GRAY

More merry music from a '60s-drenched pop hippie

MACY GRAY

THE TROUBLE WITH BEING MYSELF ★★★

EPIC

>>> THE MISSIONARY POSITION suits Macy Gray just fine. "All of my troubles, they go away when you're on top of me, lovin' me," she sings in "Screamin'," from her third album, *The Trouble With Being Myself*. While her hip-hop contemporaries define sex as a competitive sport, the Grammy-winning Gray prefers to be a pleasure seeker, convinced that happiness beats power-tripping.

The music makes her giddiness contagious. "It Ain't the Money" baits the hip-hop demographic, with Pharoahe Monch rapping. But then comes the switch: Gray nixes programmed tracks for old-fashioned soul, made by live musicians who sound overjoyed to jam.

Born in 1970, Gray never saw the '60s, but she's heard them; her tracks reach back to Sly & the Family Stone with wah-wah guitars, cackling drums and guffawing horns. No one else in

the twenty-first century has whipped up the grooving jubilation Gray summons on the jazz-Latin-funk big-band vamp of "Every Now and Then."

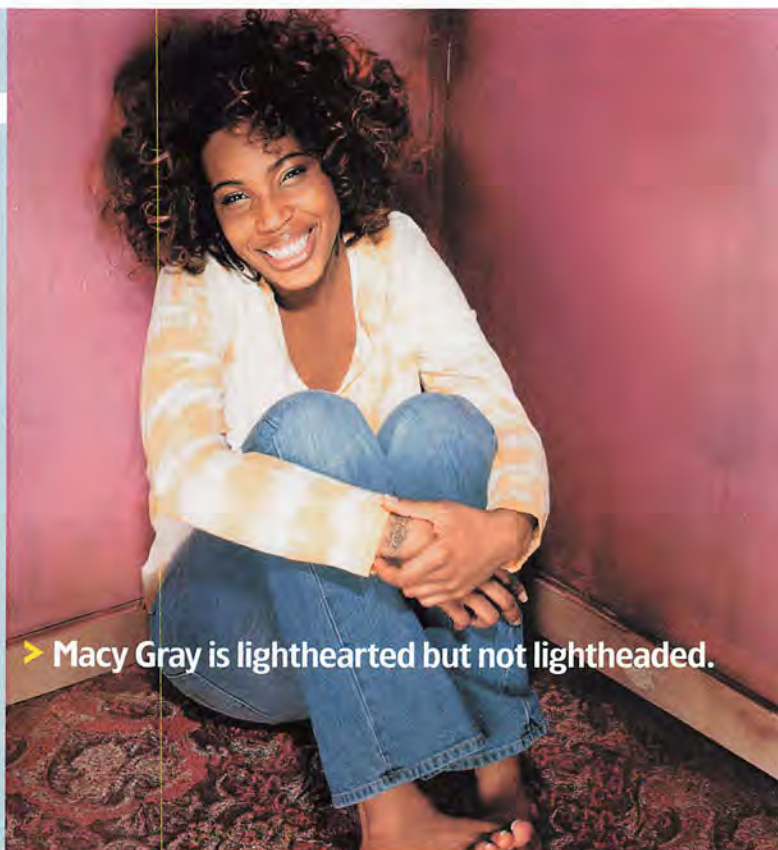
Gray is lighthearted but not lightheaded. Comedy is built into her high, hazy scratch of a voice, and she matches it with lyrics that joke about serious things. In the blithe ska bounce of "My Fondest Childhood Memories," she discovers Dad boffing the baby-sitter and Mom getting plunged by the plumber; she saves her parents' marriage by murdering the help.

Behind the giggles, there's often a streak of wry heartbreak that dates back to Gray's first hit, "I Try." In "Things That Made Me Change," she's a struggling single mom; in "When I See You" she promises to make up after a fight. Her words are determined to find a bright side, and her music makes sure it's close at hand. JON PARELES

MACY GRAY'S CURRENT LISTENING

VARIOUS ARTISTS
RED HOT + RIOT: THE MUSIC AND SPIRIT OF FELA KUTI *MCA*

PAUL MOONEY
RACE STEPS *SUN*



> Macy Gray is lighthearted but not lightheaded.

pair are about to force their way into your stereo, turn everything up to 11 and mosh all over the delicate electronics. Happily, *Ego War* doesn't disappoint, offering an instant hit of raucous energy via choppy rave-house dynamics, high-density, Daft Punk-style production and a refreshingly anti-epic approach to songwriting (most tracks are around three minutes long). Their obvious reference points are the Prodigy and the Streets, as vocalist Simon Franks's half-sung "raps" make clear. His sometimes belligerent, sometimes dreamily reflective delivery phases in and out of the mix as the music careers from vivid acid-funk ("Snake") to bass-propelled house ("Hit the Ceiling") and sneering techno-punk ("We Don't Care"). With club culture still dozing in a trance-induced coma, Audio Bullys' shock treatment is long overdue.

RUPERT HOWE

BETTIE SERVEERT

LOG 22 ★★★

PALOMINE/HIDDEN AGENDA

Nineties indie-pop refugees serve up a quirky Dutch treat

Obscurity suits Bettie Serveert. Hyped as indie-rock wunderkinds a decade ago, the Amsterdam-based group was buried by a post-grunge avalanche and instead burrowed toward oblivion. Now free of expectations, the Betties have never sounded better: *Log 22* may be Holland's greatest export since Heineken. Though rooted in jagged, moody pop, Bettie Serveert gleefully indulge their favorite sounds: They riff on the Velvet Underground's "Lady Godiva's Operation" on the rambling "The Ocean, My Floor," while "Smack" is a high-adrenaline kick of mid-'90s Britpop. Whether delivering thrashy rockers or grand heartstring-tuggers, singer Carol Van Dyk's groggy delivery and loopy lyrical sense somehow come out oddly seductive: "Life could be so easy, like tonguing candy from your molars," she sings in "Have a Heart." It's meant to be sweet and reassuring, but it's also sexy as hell.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

BOBBY "BLUE" BLAND

BLUES AT MIDNIGHT ★★★

MALACO

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame crooner is bluer than the summer sky

Despite a half-century of recording songs about heartache, Bobby "Blue" Bland still finds new hues of misery. The voice of bitter, hard-earned experience, his passionate crooning marked the intersection of uptown blues and deep soul on such landmarks as 1961's "Turn On Your Love Light." And he's remained prolific, based for nearly two decades at



Blur: Oldest members of the Britpop/High School chess club

Malaco Records, the Mississippi label devoted to sustaining Southern soul. Now 73, Bland still brings a smoldering flair to delicious tales of pain, his velvet rasp slightly tattered by time. *Blues at Midnight* works beautifully, from the swinging "Baby What's Wrong with You" to the aching "Where Do I Go From Here" to a poignant "What a Wonderful World" that compares favorably to Louis Armstrong's version — or Joey Ramone's.

JON YOUNG

BLUR

THINK TANK ★★

VIRGIN

Minus founding guitarist Graham Coxon, Blur reimagine themselves — as Radiohead Jr.

With Gorillaz' cartoon jumble of hip-hop and Britpop, and his clever Africa-meets-electronica project, *Mali Music*, Blur singer Damon Albarn proved he can make interesting music without his band's founding guitarist, Graham

Coxon. But on their first new album in four years, recorded in Morocco, the Coxon-less Blur seem half a band, adrift in a loopy, moody, head cold-with-a-melody sound world that falls some-

where short of Radiohead.

There's no shortage of provocative ideas or sounds — the gauzy daydream of acoustic guitars and bass in "Out of Time," the elegiac piano ballad "Battery in

Your Leg" (the only track on which Coxon plays) — but nothing has the heft or clarity of Blur's slow-build classics "Tender" and "Beetlebum."

BEN SISARIO

CAITLIN CARY

I'M STAYING OUT ★★★

YEP ROC

Former Whiskeytown resident keeps country safe for grownups

On her second full-length album, former Whiskeytown fiddler-singer Caitlin Cary plays it safe with a slew of solid songs that while hardly uniform, fit pretty snugly in the Adult Alternative mold. There's not a lot of range in her slightly husky twang, but it's nice to hear her phrasing stretch out on the Patsy Cline-ish "Please Break My Heart." Aside from that, *I'm Staying Out* is most enjoyable on the two tracks — "Cello Girl" and "Lorraine Today" — that draw most heavily on the shifting dynamics and rangy instrumental lines of her former band. While her current group probably gets along much better on the road than her combative former mates ever did, this new material could benefit from the kind of friction that kept Whiskeytown from being stable for more than a few months.

JOHN DeFORE

CHOPPA

STRAIGHT FROM THE N.O. ★★

THE NEW NO LIMIT/UNIVERSAL

The latest No Limit soldier loves to say his own name

"Choppa styyyyyle! Chop-Chop-Choppa styyyyyle!" With a big local buzz in his native New Orleans, Choppa takes his music nationwide with the infectiously kinetic, self-aggrandizing hit "Choppa Style." He's the flagship artist on Master P's rechristened New No Limit Records, but his effusive debut packs few surprises, never straying far from the synthesized horn blasts and polyrhythmic percussion that make up a tired Dirty South template. At his best, Choppa's vocal style combines Nelly's party-time exhortations with Juvenile's lazy slur, but in the long haul, he comes off like just another twerk-obsessed Big Easy drawler. For a guy named Choppa, he's about as sharp as a bowling ball.

DAVE BRY

COBRA VERDE

EASY LISTENING ★★★

MUSCLE TONE

Passionate post-glam indie-rock expressly for punks who like a little glitter in the gutter

With absolutely no shame and just the right amount of irony, Cobra Verde embrace classic-rock posturing with all of its messy emotional overreach, wanky-yet-tasteful guitar solos and bombastic songcraft. Fortunately, Cobra head John Petkovic and four of his pals — who have been cranking out smart glosses on old forms since the mid-'90s, reaching an apex on 1999's brilliant *Nightlife* — are convincingly good at bringing arena-size pomp to underground rock clubs. Petkovic is fond of glam's cartoonish metaphors ("Modified Frankenstein," a muted New York Dolls moment) and fondness for storytelling (the Bic-lighter power ballad "Throw It Away"). The title "To Your Pretty Face" telegraphs the record's →



Caitlin Cary's head is permanently tilted from marathon fiddling.

ASTONISHING FACT! >>

For their latest record, BLUR had a state-of-the-art recording studio flown to the Moroccan desert. It took a week just to get the speakers through customs!

I LOVE THIS CD!



NAT "KING" COLE
THE DEFINITIVE
NAT "KING" COLE
BLUE NOTE

"I've been listening to this Nat King Cole collection a lot. It helps me when I just want to chill."



JAY WILLIAMS
CHICAGO BULLS
GUARD

glammiest moment, but all of *Easy Listening* glitters in the spotlight.

JOE GROSS

COLD

YEAR OF THE SPIDER ★★

FLIP/GEFFEN

Nü-metallers give alternative-rock leftovers a black-eyed goth makeover

Despite hailing from the same stable of tortured rock rage as Limp Bizkit and Staind, Cold bring a different anger management to their otherwise conventional modern rock. As on their previous album, 2000's *13 Ways to Bleed on Stage*, this Jacksonville, Florida, five-piece folds in dark-trench-coat angst à la the Cure and Sister of Mercy, thanks to the goth-rockin' bleat of frontman Scooter Ward. (Yes, Virginia, there is a goth named Scooter.) Despite the added-value atmospheric, Cold's rebellious pose remains lowest-common-denominator — it's hard to take seriously a song called "Kill the Music Industry" when it's next to lighter-raisin' power ballads like "Tragedy."

MATT DIEHL

EDWYN COLLINS

DOCTOR SYNTAX ★★★

INSTINCT

Splendid, grownup pop music from Scottish punk survivor

Even in the early '80s, when he led Scottish janglers Orange Juice, the quixotic Edwyn Collins thought it was a good idea to sound like Al Green fronting the Buzzcocks. Several solo career false starts ended in 1995, when his song "A Girl Like You" made the *Austin Powers* soundtrack and finally sold him some records. *Doctor Syntax* steals its title from a nineteenth-century satirical novel, which is appropriate, because Collins's creamy, sensual voice disguises a withering wit. More laid-back and twilit than his previous releases — and heavier on electro-funky pastiches than pure-hearted guitar work — the album targets empty-headed scene-sters, druggy rock stars and Collins's own indolent dark side. On the confessional "Splitting Up," he announces he's doing just that, as a band and a human being. Few singers can be this tender, bleak and funny at the same time.

ANDREW HARRISON

RUSSELL CROWE & THIRTY ODD FOOT OF GRUNTS

OTHER WAYS OF SPEAKING ★

ARTEMIS

As a songwriter, *A Beautiful Mind* star is a pretty good singer

Let's get one thing out of the way: Russell Crowe can really sing. Ranging

from an intimate baritone growl to a high register that recalls David Bowie (!), the macho actor more than holds his own as a vocalist on the third outing with his Sydney, Australia-based band. As a songwriter, though, he's a washout, and his overwrought lyrics and bland adult-contemporary rock run the gamut

from mundane to embarrassing — e.g., the unfortunately titled "Swallow My Gift." Even Chrissie Hynde, who duets on "Never Be Alone Again," sounds uncool. The band is solid — though, really, a full-time trumpet player? — and a live version of "Folsom Prison Blues" is good fun. But in music, as in movies, Crowe is



Fleetwood Mac: Imagine what they'd look like if they *hadn't* done \$20 million in blow

GARDEN PARTY

Two great songwriters revive a soft-rock franchise

FLEETWOOD MAC

SAY YOU WILL ★★★

REPRISE

WHO SAYS AGE makes you mellow? A creakier, bitter, more despondent Fleetwood Mac reappear on *Say You Will*, which reconvenes four-fifths of the lineup that made *Fleetwood Mac* (1975) and *Rumours* (1977) before dispersing over the '80s and '90s. Those two albums transformed the band's failing marriages and musical-beds liaisons into such barbed soft-rock anthems as "Landslide" and "Go Your Own Way," wrapping desire and recrimination in gleaming guitars.

The group's two '70s stars — sultry-voiced, shawl-twirling sexpot Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham, who could play anything with a fret board — return and push toward extremes.

They tease at continuing the soap opera, directly invoking familiar tunes while exchanging songs about infidelity, porn stars and the reunion of estranged lovers. Buckingham's "Steal Your Heart Away" wishes for a second romantic chance in a folk-

rock chorus that the early Byrds would have loved.

But their reunion is a quickie: The album ends with Buckingham singing "Say Goodbye" followed by Nicks replying with "Goodbye Baby." It's not the old Mac cooperative; with her latter-day croak, Nicks's harmonies feel like overdubbing, not intimacy.

Buckingham, who produced the album, seems more committed to his grimly incoherent political musings and the marvels of his arrangements. "Red Rover" builds a whole orchestra out of picked strings, while "Come" explodes into a garage-rock stomp and guitar flameout.

Start the 18-song album in the middle, and embarrassments like Nicks's "Illumine (9-11)" (yes, she's burning a candle for the WTC dead) recede behind love songs that exorcise pain with an accusatory chorus and a skein of guitars. That's no longer all they want to do, but they haven't forgotten how. **JON PARELES**



probably better off letting someone else decide what comes out of his mouth.

JOHN RATLIFF

EVAN DANDO

BABY I'M BORED ★★★

BAR/NONE

Former Lemonheads singer goes solo with introspective charm



Even when he was swanning Winona Ryder to movie premieres, Evan Dando remained a shaggy, mild-mannered folk-pop singer who loved drugs, not grooming. So it's no surprise that seven years after the Lemonheads' demise, Dando's first solo outing is shambling and confessional. Strummy tunefulness, deep-bottomed drumming and the camaraderie of alt-rock heavy hitters (Ben Lee, Jon Brion, Giant Sand's Howie Gelb) propel Dando, but it's the songwriter's clear, earnest voice and self-effacing humor that give heart to the tunes — the crystalline simplicity of "Why Do You Do This to Yourself," the bone-bare, handclap-punctuated "Waking Up" and the heart-breaking musings of "Hard Drive." Even with a small army attending to the songs, Dando's music remains as untouched by glitter as he is.

ARION BERGER

DJ ENVY

DJ ENVY BLOK PARTY VOL. 1: THE DESERT STORM MIXTAPE ★★

DESSERT/EPIC

New York DJ loads his mix tape with Jay-Z and other stars, erases himself

Unlike other commercial mix tapes by such DJs such as Tony Touch or Funkmaster Flex, this one, by the self-proclaimed "Mix Tape Assassin," offers no production or actual mixing from the headlining DJ Envy. It could have used his flavor. Despite the presence of big-timers Jay-Z, Ja Rule and 50-Cent's G-Unit crew amid 17 street-hardened anthems, the songs here are mostly boastful but bland throwaways, as dubious as Envy's role. There are some exceptions: Redman flaunts a stoned-soul party rap, Foxy Brown squeals like a pig and, amusingly, Cash Money's Baby sings to a cellphone-alert version of the opera "Carmen." Maybe Envy's involved because Bizet was too busy?

JOSEPH PATEL

DUMP

A GROWN-ASS MAN ★★★

SHRIMP

Classic rock meets classic indie-rock on Yo La Tengo side project

This long-running solo outlet for Yo La Tengo bassist James McNew mostly

traverses typical YLT terrain, commingling guitar-centric chamber pop, post-punk discord and tinkly-dink electronica. However, McNew adds his own hybrid theory, wittily merging classic and iconoclastic by exploring his influences. "Daily Affirmation" rides a syrupy bass like the missing link between Joy Division and Crazy Horse, while "I'm on Your Side" works a pretty good Velvets-Beach Boys homage. McNew's penchant for surprising covers continues the dichotomy, with an unironic soft-rock twist of Gerald Levert's quiet-storm ballad "Mr. Too Damn Good." On his utterly faithful cover of Thin Lizzy's barstool-blues anthem "Cowboy Song," the unabashed '70s hard-rock swagger clashes nicely with Dump's sometimes too-polite indie-rock aesthetics.

MATT DIEHL

ELEFANT

ELEFANT ★★☆☆

KEHADO/PALM PICTURES

Charismatic NYC quartet with an Argentine lead singer takes a romantic, '80s-era spin on urban ennu

"Tastes like candy/Tastes like a little piece of candy," Diego Garcia sings near



The vindictive rhythm section glued Evanescence's singer to the table.

the start of this record, before trailing off into a series of "yeah, yeah, yeahs." Sweet and agreeable, the lyric perfectly encapsulates Elefant's mighty charms. Some listeners might be reminded of the Strokes' urbane edge and concise songwriting — squeezing 10 tunes into 32 minutes, this record is brief — but Elefant's songs are even more redolent of the nostalgic teen dramas (*Pretty in Pink*) of 1980s director John Hughes. The music is dramatic with a glamorous Britpop insouciance, and Garcia is a refreshingly earnest romantic: He sings about misfit boys, impossible girls and climactic dance scenes. Beaus present their belles with "chocolate and beer"

while aspiring to the state of "being young." Elefant's debut is so strong, you may find yourself shouting its praises from a rooftop — just like the protagonist in a teen flick.

ALEC HANLEY BEMIS

EVANESCENCE

FALLEN ★★☆☆

WIND-UP

"Haunted" Arkansas mall girl goes Eurometal on your ass

More intent on stoking the pit than massaging the brain, today's metal bands seem to have forgotten that Metallica's best songs weren't just hard but pretty too. Like a cross between Kittie and Snake River Conspiracy, Little Rock foursome Evanescence combine majestic, Scandinavian-style heavy metal, noisy industrial pop and keening melodies belted by 20-year-old goth chick Amy Lee. Guitarist Ben Moody's judiciously unleashed chords, sleek as vinyl and anvil-heavy, whip layers of wistful piano, drum-machine jitter and sweeping strings into something akin to a thunderstorm rolling through a very expensive studio. And while the occasional folk guitar, double-bass-drum rolls and epic key changes echo Euro

greats like Opeth, Lee sounds like little else when she rides the lightning.

NICK CATUCCI

BILL FRISELL

THE INTERCONTINENTALS

★★★☆☆

NONESUCH

It's a small world after all, as prolific guitar jazzbo makes first trip abroad

Thunderheads gather on the horizon but a storm never quite breaks on mellow experimentalist Bill Frisell's tentative foray into Benetton multiculturalism. An album of languid grooves and slowly descending melodies, *The Intercontinentals* combines the all-American loop and twang of Frisell and pedal-steel wiz →

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ABS-FAB

Bedroom balladeer should stick to the bedroom

GINUWINE

THE SENIOR ★★

EPIC

➤➤ NAMING HIS FOURTH album *The Senior* is Ginuwine's way of saying he's ready to graduate from his younger days as a bedroom serenader. As if to overemphasize the point, the hunky singer comes out of the gate playing the role of boastful upper-classman, flaunting his status and wealth like he's P. Diddy.

On the opening song, "Get Ready," Ginuwine descends from a bed of gospel cries and harpsichord strings to announce his arrival, likening it to a messiah returning to his people. "Chedda Brings" rehashes the tired pop-star idiom of "mo' money, mo' problems" as Ginuwine laments the pitfalls of being successful. On "Hell Yeah," he raps about strip clubs and VIP rooms. The electric beats of the song are styled for the clubs, but the themes don't exactly show a common touch.

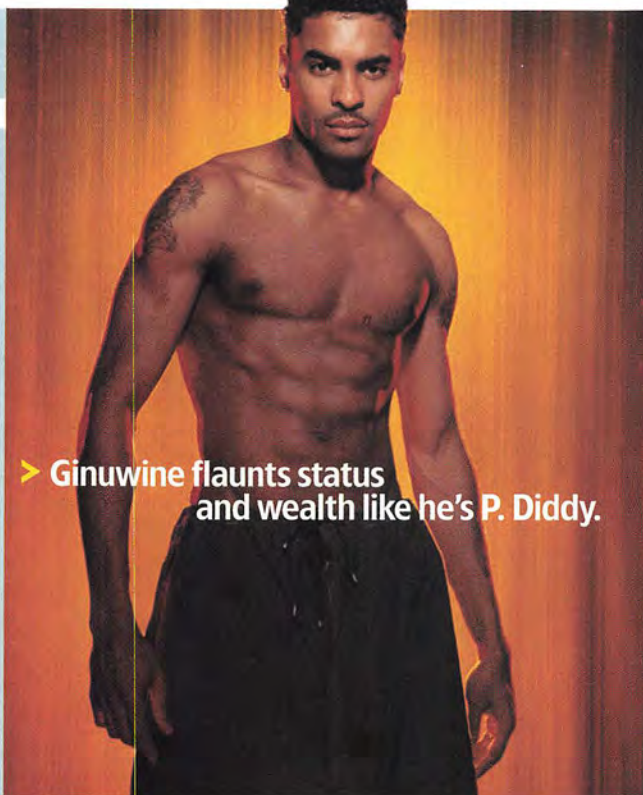
Maybe Ginuwine is still drunk off the success he had last year, when he used the slick, sultry hook in his voice to turn the lumbering rapper Fat Joe into a pop star on the hit single "Crush Tonight." Ginuwine's real talent, though, is relating to people. When he sings passionately about matters of the heart — trying to get a woman's number ("In Those Jeans") or starting a family ("First Born") — his intimacy is moving.

It's unfortunate that the balladry is rendered via anesthetized soul instead of the ambitious arrangements of Timbaland, who produced Ginuwine's first two albums. Ginuwine has the raw vocal talent to often overcome it by the rapture of his delivery. But this record makes you wonder if he's gotten any wiser as he's gotten older. JOSEPH PATEL

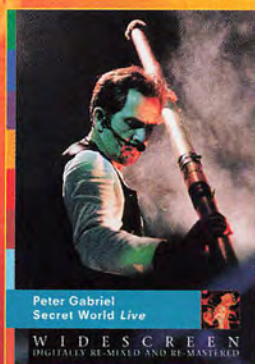
GINUWINE'S CURRENT LISTENING

- JODECI *FOREVER MY LADY* UPTOWN/PIGCA
- MISSY ELLIOTT *UNDER CONSTRUCTION* GOLD MIND/ELEKTRA

➤ Ginuwine flaunts status and wealth like he's P. Diddy.



SEE WHAT YOU HEAR



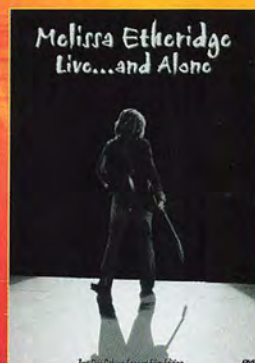
PETER GABRIEL
Secret World Live



THE JAM
1977-1982
The Complete Jam On Film



JIMI HENDRIX
Blue Wild Angel: Live At The Isle Of Wight



MELISSA ETHERIDGE
Live...and Alone
2 DVD Set

Greg Leisz with Greek-Macedonian oud player Christos Govettas, Brazilian singer-percussionist Vinicius Cantuária, Malian percussionist Sidiki Camara and violinist Jenny Scheinman. The group meshes gloriously on the promising openers "Boubacar" and "Good Old People," where African rhythms give new spark to Frisell's comfortable country-and-western harmonies. Each member eventually steps out, most notably Cantuária on his own dreamy "Perritos," yet other cuts, such as "Anywhere Road," sound like they could've been recorded, well, anywhere.

RICHARD GEHR

LISA GERMANO

LULLABY FOR LIQUID PIG

ARTIST/DIRECT/INEFFABLE

You'd be this depressed too if you were once John Mellencamp's violin player

Lisa Germano pushes confessional intimacy to unsettling extremes. Her sixth similar album, her strongest yet, vividly depicts the folly of treating loneliness with liberal doses of alcohol. But this is no lecture on substance abuse: With her uneasy-sigh voice and gorgeous yet wobbly melodies,

Germano speaks from experience, portraying sodden isolation as a twisted state of grace. "You know what I mean/I don't mean anything," she murmurs in "It's Party Time"; on the droopy "Dream Glasses Off" she declares, "Someday someone/Is gonna love you" with an utter lack of conviction. Subtle support from Neil Finn and Johnny Marr pales next to this anguished persona. Unashamed candor often spells dreary self-indulgence. In Germano's insightful hands, it's fascinating and strangely exhilarating.

JON YOUNG



Gob wear black to symbolize their punky contempt for plaids and pastels.

GOB

FOOT IN MOUTH DISEASE

ARISTA

For these pop-punkers, the fourth album's the charmless

Picking Gob to open her first arena tour was a smart move for Avril Lavigne: They'll help the bill's snide-youth quotient without upstaging her. Musically, these Vancouver punks' latest is a fine example of radio-ready mall-riffage. "Oh! Ellin" and "I Cut Myself Too," in particular, are straightforward, Weezerific smashes. Unfortunately, Gob's emotional palette never gets less smug or less cranky than an I-miss-you-cuz-I'm-bored "love" song. In a rare moment of class warfare, Gob rail against Mercedes cars and the rich kids who love them, on "Give Up the Grudge." It's an attempt at a rap-happy "Fat Lip"-type boast, but the lack of originality or wit ("Shut your fucking mouth!") is hardly a clever riposte) dulls the impact of their indignation. Gob can be just as frustrating as the crushes Lavigne sings about—but nowhere near as complicated.

ANTHONY MICCIO

GOLDFRAPP

BLACK CHERRY

MUTE

Down-tempo duo embraces sex and synthesizers

The trip-hop noir of Goldfrapp's *Felt Mountain* was a sleeper hit with dinner hosts, crazy Brenda from *Six Feet Under* and anyone fed up waiting for Portishead to remember where they left the studio keys. The

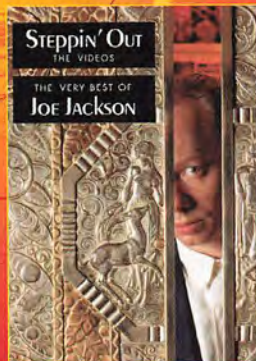
follow-up is a far less sedate proposition, leather-clad and neon-lit. Alison Goldfrapp has been reborn as a malevolent disco dominatrix, while beatsmith Will Gregory conducts filthy synth romps like an X-rated Giorgio Moroder. "Strict Machine" is "I Feel Love" rewritten as an S&M grind, and the kohl-eyed electropop of "Twist" resembles Garbage trawling the red-light district. Although a few tracks retain *Felt Mountain*'s eerie beauty, *Black Cherry*'s natural habitat is less supper club than strip club, and Goldfrapp sound right at home.

DORIAN LYNKEY

ASTONISHING FACT! >>
GOB obsessively collect junk. While on the road, they fill a 25-gallon tub with such prized items as Bart Simpson skateboards and toy megaphones.



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Godsmack wait until the joke is explained to them again.



REGURGITATE

New Englanders dine a third time on the same meal

GODSMACK

FACELESS ★★

REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL

➔ METAL HAS ALWAYS been more about reliability than reinvention, ritual more than innovation, but Godsmack turn that conservatism into a millstone — albeit a multiplatinum millstone. After two albums that were as similar as identical twins and turned Godsmack into Ozzfest-approved hitmakers, the Boston quartet has made a third CD from the same mold.

Just as Grand Funk Railroad filled arenas in the early '70s by reducing Detroit's blowtorch punk-metal to boogie clichés, Godsmack are the blue-collar journeymen of a genre that's most thrilling when it pushes extremes of personality and sound.

There are moments on *Faceless* when Godsmack nearly transcend their reputation as nu-metal's Grand Funk Railroad: Tony Rombola's stoned-immaculate wah-wah guitar on the title track; the cymbal barrage by new drummer Shannon Larkin that closes "Straight Out of Line"; and the stacks of guitars that put a charge into "Changes."

Rombola treats his guitar more like a percussion instrument. When he cuts loose for his only extended solo, on "Realign," it's a bracing lesson in the power of excess. But he's stuck with a singer, Sully Erna (a practicing Wiccan), who specializes in two moods: pissed and *really* pissed. When he broods, Erna drones like Alice in Chains' late Layne Staley; when he seethes, he bites off phrases like Metallica's James Hetfield.

As a lyricist, he's stuck in second gear: He sings about how he's "sick of my life" — oops, sorry, that was on *Awake*, from 2000. On *Faceless*, he's "tired . . . broken," still nihilistic, *grrrrrrrnting* like he's oiling up for a WWE showdown.

Too bad Godsmack can't break the habit of repeating themselves. Even the tribal drums on "The Awakening" sound imported from their three-year-old hit "Voodoo." At least there's truth in advertising: *Faceless* is exactly that. GREG KOT

SULLY ERNA'S CURRENT LISTENING

A PERFECT CIRCLE MER DE NOMS VIRGIN

JANE'S ADDICTION NOTHING'S SHOCKING WARNER BROS.

MARTIN L. GORE

COUNTERFEIT 2 ★★

MUTE/REPRISE

Depeche Mode songwriter's surprise-free covers album

While Depeche Mode frontman David Gahan prepares his own solo album, Martin L. Gore — the Beavis look-alike who writes DM's songs — arrives with a record of covers. At least this time, that tired, late-career idea makes sense — after 20 years of giving away lyrics, singing other people's words may be Gore's path to being himself. Unfortunately, he makes predictable choices from the approved downtown New York songbook (Lou Reed, Kurt Weill, Brian Eno, Nick Cave, Bob Dylan), like a jukebox in the world's grimmest dive bar. The musical treatment is Depeche Mode lite, setting generally passionate songs in an anti-septic electronic context, and Gore's over-earnest voice lacks the presence to reinvigorate them. A sideshow for Depeche Mode completists.

ANDREW HARRISON

GEMMA HAYES

NIGHT ON MY SIDE ★★★★★

ASTRALWORKS

Irish singer-songwriter's arrestingly vivid debut

Gemma Hayes spent her formative years busking ye olde traditional folk fare on Dublin's streets, but this 25-year-old is much more than just another Joni Mitchell acolyte. As produced by Mercury Rev's Dave Fridmann, Hayes is as influenced by My Bloody Valentine as anyone who ever wore a print dress, and in its drone of distorted guitars and lyrical tales that start off like dreams before descending into nightmares, *Night On My Side* offers a twisted melancholy David Lynch would applaud. "Hanging Around" confirms her flair for a sweet, melodic hook, but the album impresses most when it descends into woozy paranoia, as on "Lucky One," which throws shadows sinister enough to prompt goose bumps. Few can make folk frightening; Hayes drives a stake through its pretty little heart.

NICK DUERDEN

THE HIDDEN CAMERAS

THE SMELL OF OUR OWN ★★★★★

ROUGH TRADE

Toronto pop orchestra sounds like Phil Spector, only Christian and gay

At the Hidden Cameras' spectacular live shows, impassioned audiences sing

along like Baptists at a revival. But Jerry Falwell won't be calling anytime soon: Singer Joel Gibb dubs his band's debut "gay church folk music" — and he doesn't mean "happy." In songs like "Golden Streams" and "Boys of Melody," the Cameras mix sex and spirituality over a gorgeous bed of organs, harps and 12-part harmonies. The whole thing climaxes (so to speak) with a sublime celebration of brotherly love called "The Man That I Am With My Man." It's never clear if "my man" refers to Jesus or a lover, but as Gibb might ask, what's the difference?

JOSH EELLS

JAYHAWKS

RAINY DAY SONGS ★★★★★

AMERICAN/LOST HIGHWAY

Minnesotans make gorgeous Americana that lacks originality

The seventh album by Minneapolis's Jayhawks is a gorgeous, streamlined piece of acoustic Americana, beautiful and fully realized. Produced by Ethan Johns, the Great Oz behind Ryan Adams, it's a stripped-down affair that drapes songwriter Gary Louris's achy, lovelorn sentimentality with tastefully elegant arrangements. But like too many other alt-country folks who write wide-eyed odes to girls with names like Sarah Jane and Angelyne, it's entirely imitative — a little Neil Young here, some Gram Parsons there, with an

occasional flat-out rip-off like the CSN-circa-'71 dead ringer "Madman." There are already enough sincere songwriters

out there who think

1971 was a year worth reliving.

BEN SISARIO

JOHNNY SOCIETY

LIFE BEHIND THE 21st CENTURY WALL ★★★★★

MESSINGER

Crafty New York band wraps mature ambition in tasty power-pop

Following up on their lauded third album, 2000's *Clairvoyance*, the piano-heavy New York quartet Johnny Society continues turning out music that is as catchy as the best pop of the past but also full of fresh ideas. Reworking such influences as Elton John, Cheap Trick and John Lennon, frontman Kenny Siegal creates songs that are uplifting without being cloying or sentimental. The power chords of the opening track, "Charity," show roots in rock, and on the 14 broadly varied songs, Siegal switches from rockably falsetto to throaty growl. He revels in MFA-worthy lyrics, fleshed out on occasion by the banjo, organ and

ASTONISHING FACT! >>

When they were starting out, THE KILLS built their own microphones out of old telephone receivers to sound gritty. They're the art-punk MacGyvers!

clavinet. Next, Johnny Society apparently plan to make an album with a chief inspiration, Cheap Trick's Robin Zander, certifying their skills.

JOHN DONOHUE

THE KILLS

KEEP ON YOUR MEAN SIDE

★★★

DOMINO

Grease-covered U.K. duo harks back to rock's spiteful past

The Kills are a sleazy London-based rock & roll duo in love with the violent minimalism of Lou Reed's Velvet Underground and the Rolling Stones' more brutal moments. Hotel (guitar) supplies the dark shades and attitude; VV (vocals) supplies the dark shades and looks. She bristles like Courtney Love with a smaller makeup budget, zonked out on hatred of the sunshine of her native Florida. Their debut boasts some seriously nasty black-eyeliner glare and killer choruses: "Monday morning/You got a warning/ Stab your back," they bellow on "Fuck the People." Cocky and nicotine-stained, the Kills revive the cheap art of sinister underground rock and puzzling, mysterious pseudonyms.

EVERETT TRUE



Jayhawks: In alt-country, this is fashion.

DANIEL LANOIS

SHINE ★★★

ANTI-/EPITAPH

Superstar producer returns with gorgeous sounds, anemic songs

For his first disc in a decade, Canadian-born Daniel Lanois, who has brought vast, echoey solemnity to his production for U2 and Bob Dylan, takes a cue from his mentor, ambient genius Brian Eno. The moody instrumentals here, showcasing Lanois's sometimes spacey, sometimes earthy pedal steel, could

give mood music a good name. The tunes with lyrics, though (with clients Emmylou Harris and Bono on backup), repeat their least imaginative lines and add little to the lovely sonic wallpaper. The sleepy-sad "As Tears Roll By" is offset with the same mysterious swamp vibe that made 1993's *For the Beauty of Wynona* addictive, but only the fuzzy reggae of "Power of One" is lively enough to rouse a dozing listener and hint at what the record might have been with a little less midnight meditation.

JOHN DeFORE

THE LONG WINTERS

WHEN I PRETEND TO FALL

★★★

BARSUK

Late-blooming Seattle pop songsmith, joined by the Northwest's music elite

A decade after Cameron Crowe's *Singles* depicted the town Nirvana built, the Long Winters represent a Seattle scene where Matt Dillon's character, a grungy cad, has been supplanted by arty, earnest Campbell Scott. Frontman John Roderick has been a drunk, a hobo and an alt-rock also-ran with local darlings Western State Hurricanes. Now the 34-year-old multi-instrumentalist makes brainy, brooding, classically "indie" guitar

music that coproducer Ken Stringfellow (formerly of the Posies, now a R.E.M. sideman) transmutes into something more lush and poppier, roomy enough for bittersweet bubblegum ("Stupid"), countrified strum-and-harmony ("Cinnamon") and textured, horn-y soul ("Scared Straight"). Best of all is "Prom Night at Hater High," which has the dramatic stomp of Mott the Hoople and a slurred vocal worthy of Warren Zevon.

JASON COHEN

MARIA MCKEE

HIGH DIVE ★★★

VIEWFINDER

Former Lone Justice singer lets the sun set on alt-country

As frontwoman for Lone Justice in the mid-'80s, Maria McKee was rock's →

I LOVE THIS CD!



CHRISTOPHER MELONI
STAR OF OZ

 **TOOL LATERALUS**
VOLCANO

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IT'S BEEN A LONG, STRANGE TRIP

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Jack Johnson tries to think of a rhyme for *fungus*.



BAREFOOTIN'

Newly famous beach bum overhauls acoustic traditions

JACK JOHNSON

ON AND ON ★★★★★

MOONSHINE CONSPIRACY/UNIVERSAL

➤➤ JACK JOHNSON IS one serious malcontent in sunblock. The Hawaii-born filmmaker and former pro surfer pulled off a major move last year with *Brushfire Fairytales*, an indie album that sneaked its way to platinum thanks to "Flake," a sandy hit that updated beach vibes better than any music since Jimmy Buffett praised the pleasures of Key West in the mid-'70s. But with *On and On*, Johnson pushes past those folk- and roots-distressed interiors and glides into cool new musical areas.

Produced by Beastie Boys associate Mario Caldato Jr., the music here is rigorously uncluttered — even when that means subtracting the vintage detailing Johnson loves. Aside from his guitar, the arrangements are elemental, featuring Adam Topol on drums and percussion and Merlo Podlewski playing bass.

Conceptually, reggae and blues rule pieces such as "Taylor" and "The Horizon Has Been Defeated," on which Johnson knits together sweet,

angular melodies with minimalist accompaniment.

Without any strain, Johnson tweaks old styles until they throw off new buzzes. He shows the care and nuance of a dramatically understated surf Sinatra on such ballads as the deliberate "Traffic in the Sky" and the swinging "Cupid." The collection builds into a kinetic combination of tenderness and restlessness, quiet luster and undeniable craft.

On and On is an album by a romantic who is gently puzzled by the world's shallowness ("Bling-bling/ Those are only removable things") and lack of interest in what he finds beautiful. "It was magic at first," he sings on "Cookie Jar," a requiem for the early days of black-and-white television. As Johnson testifies against ocean-soft waves of snare and bass, he seems at odds with every colorful modern convenience. And he shows how to turn disillusion into transcendence. **JAMES HUNTER**

JACK JOHNSON'S CURRENT LISTENING

- CURTIS MAYFIELD *LIVE AT THE BITTER END* CTM
- THE GABOR SZABO SEXTET *THE SZABO EQUATION* DCC

great white hope, admired for her country-inflected versions of songs by serious elder statesmen like Bruce Springsteen and Bono. Her last solo album, 1996's *Life Is Sweet*, was a sophisticated snooze, though, and *High Dive* could be called a compromise. Some of her material still has an emotional earnestness that would make Bono blush: "To the Open Spaces," an alt-country ode to the road, could be a Lone Justice outtake, and "In Your Constellation" has the soaring singing and clear-eyed passion of her best work. On other songs, that high drama turns high baroque — "Life Is Sweet" is overarranged city slickness, and the title track features a muted horn. She never should have left the country.

ROBERT LEVINE

MOBB DEEP

FREE AGENTS: THE MURDA MIXTAPE ★★★★★

LANDSPEED

Queensbridge Projects prophets revisit the mid-'90s on sixth album

As the 50 Cent craze proves, it's thug time again. On cue, Mobb Deep have returned to the hardened street narratives they perfected with 1995's morose gangsta landmark *The Infamous*. On their best release since, the sullen Prodigy and Havoc seem relieved of the commercial expectations that made recent forays into the poppier mainstream ring false — the album is even presented in spontaneous, street-corner mix-tape form. "Let's Pop" and "Came Up" are vivid, blaxploitation drug-and-weapon fantasies spit over minimal soul breaks, and they recall the youthful rebellion that characterized Mobb Deep's hungrier, more prodigious days. Revisiting that time more directly, the boys lay new freestyles over some of their classic instrumentals. Ripping off yourself? Now that's gangsta!

JOSEPH PATEL

NEW PORNOGRAPHERS

ELECTRIC VERSION ★★★★★

MATADOR

Feisty Canucks try to refrain from groping one another on meticulously poppy set

In the tradition of Mike Myers and Avril Lavigne, these indie-rockers continue to show that Canadians are more American than Americans are. On *Electric Version*, their second album, the Vancouver group — their name was inspired by a Jimmy Swaggart book that called rock music the new porn — gleefully believes in skinny-tie music, with

Blondie keyboards and Cheap Trick bubblegum power chords underpinning precision four-part harmonies. Their lyrics are arch: "Can we control

ourselves for once/Keep our hands off each other/Keep our minds on this song," bandleader Carl Newman sings on "Testament to Youth in Verse." But New Porn songs gush eagerness and surge like the

front car of a roller coaster — never more than when Neko Case, an alt-country heroine on her solo records, drops the twang and takes over the mic.

RJ SMITH

PET SHOP BOYS

DISCO 3 ★★★★★

SANCTUARY

Third dance-floor collection from superior disco duo

In their 20-year partnership, Britain's Pet Shop Boys have seen electronic music move from blinding-wave-of-the-future to euphoric big-night-out soundtrack, and on to its current eclipse by noisy rock. It doesn't matter: PSB remain the world's best at allying acute, funny and/or moving songwriting to thumping dance beats. As if to thumb its nose at the overearnest present, *Disco 3* is more Donna Summer and Giorgio Moroder than ever. "Positive Role Model" purloins a Barry White string riff, "Try It" covers an ancient Bobby O disco song and allows Neil Tennant to sing forlornly of his love for a married man, and Felix da Housecat's shimmering reinvention of "London" is the Pet Shop Boys' best remix in years. This is of interest only to those who like fun — and dancing.

ANDREW HARRISON

PLACEBO

SLEEPING WITH GHOSTS ★★★★★

ASTRALWERKS/HIT

Fourth record from glam-drogynous British trio deals out big rawk and medium-size beats

Placebo's spotlight moment was 1998, when they earned an appearance in the movie *Velvet Goldmine* as well as the

I LOVE THIS CD!



CAROL ALT
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED SWIMSUIT-ISSUE ALUMINA

CREED WEATHERED
WIND-UP

"It's very heavy. Listen to the words — there are really a lot of religious overtones. It definitely makes you think."

endorsement of David Bowie, who is to cosmeticized frontman Brian Molko as peanuts are to peanut butter. These days, the band hits number 1 on the French charts but no higher than "still around" on the British hipness meter. In the U.S., they're back on an indie after making two records for Virgin. On *Sleeping With Ghosts*, producer Jim Abbis (DJ Shadow, the Music) bathes Molko's weary hedonism, love-it-or-hate-it nasal snarl and Smashing Pumpkins-style riffs in a sometimes ominous, sometimes pretty electro context without sacrificing the barbed-wire guitars. But ultimately, the anthems are as generic as they are hooky, while the sonic ambition is nothing Garbage didn't master in, oh, 1998.

JASON COHEN

PRINCE PAUL

POLITICS OF THE BUSINESS ★★

RAZOR & TIE

Hip-hop's good-humor man forgets to let his audience in on the joke

Former De La Soul beat genius Prince Paul specializes in pushing the limits of hip-hop theatricality. Whether he's



Serj: "You have so much hair, and I have none at all. Wahhhhh!"

frollicking through piles of corpses and pools of blood with the Gravediggaz or composing do-gooder hip-hoperas, he's always brought wit and purpose to his work. Paul's latest concept album finds him performing an unfamiliar role — that of conformist. As a hopeful producer eager to impress his label boss (hammed up by comedian Dave Chappelle), Paul submits a parody album mimicking the most stale and stiff-armed contemporary radio beats. There are some inspired moments — check Chubb Rock, Wordsworth and MF Doom's triumphant "People, Places and Things" and newcomer W. Ellington Felton's folksy "Beautifully Absurd" —

but the joke isn't well-conceived or funny enough to sustain over an hour. HUA HSU

AMY RIGBY

TIL THE WHEELS FALL OFF ★★

SIGNATURE SOUNDS

Pop-rock's fortysomething bohemian mom runs out of ideas

Once a pissed-off barnstormer who explored the dilemmas of heeding rock's siren song while grappling with kids, an unsteady boyfriend and the effects of gravity, Rigby's themes of aging are less novel in these days of Osbournes-mania and 60-year-old Rolling Stones. On her third album, Rigby returns to the same well she dug with 1996's *Diary of a Mod Housewife*, but her finely crafted pop is slow and strained. The mood is one of vague dissatisfaction ("Shopping Around"), and the complaints ("Are We Ever Gonna Have Sex Again?") have started to sound very samey. She's had seven years to figure out how to rock free while tied to a mortgage; maybe it's time to choose one or the other.

ARION BERGER

SERJAT

SERJAT ★★★

SERJICAL STRIKE/COLUMBIA

Debut from System of a Down side project mixes world-music fetish and unpronounceable last names

Anarchists, subversives, Armenians — oh, my! Activist metallers System of a Down are proud to be all three, and this offshoot from singer Serj Tankian (with avant-folkie collaborator Arto Tunçboyacıyan) evokes another epithet: dirty hippies. Song titles like "Love Is the Peace" seem lifted from a rusty VW van bumper, but although global vibes pervade, this is no "We Are the World." Like System, SerjAT cram haunting, combustible songs with disparate sections — African beats, Middle Eastern melodies and Chinese strings — that cross borders with a fluid, dream-like utopianism. "Cinema" alternates drum & bass with Tankian's operatic howl and a raging backbeat, while "Love Is the Peace" features Islam-style chanting — perhaps the most subversive statement of all in the Arab-demonizing, war-anxious present.

JONAH WEINER



BLACK MAGIC

Candy-colored Detroit duo blows up the jukebox

THE WHITE STRIPES

ELEPHANT ★★★

THIRD MAN/V2

>>> MUSIC THAT'S CALLED "rootsy" is usually comforting, because it provides elemental truths about shared experiences. But the White Stripes' roots-blues and country is disoriented, subjective, trippy. They offer supercharged diner-jukebox music, the blues and hillbilly as played by energetic, conceptual-art brats spray-painting the roadhouse.

The cuddly Detroit duo — Meg White bashing inelegantly on drums and Jack White on guitar and vocals — made two records that got a cult following; then 2001's *White Blood Cells*, with the breakaway rocker "Fell in Love With a Girl," made them a platinum-platelet band. Now the anxiously awaited *Elephant* turns their spare principles inside out, adding overdubs, touches of '70s rock and found sound. They break their own rules, even adding expansive guitar solos, to keep themselves interested and fans off-balance. And they'll have much of America singing "Be like the squirrel, girl!" before summer's over.

Elephant is dedicated to "the death of the sweetheart," a romantic ideal Jack longs to uphold. His songs, though, are

stalked by a love that's more like black magic. Obsessive, tormented songs like "The Hardest Button to Button" and "Black Math" get their kicks from embodying the confusion.

Jack sings like Robert Plant doing musical theater: His machismo is so tarted up it turns creepy before the night's over. And when Meg sings "In the Cold, Cold Night," she has the naive charm of Mo Tucker singing for the Velvet Underground. In a strange way, the White Stripes resemble Eminem. Like their fellow Detroiters, they've drawn a mythology about themselves — the red-and-white clothes, the scorn for bass, the myth that they're brother and sister. They make listeners take notice and think we know the band — then tell us we really don't know them at all.

Here is their genius: They make us think they're simple, sweet people and then pull us into a surreal world that's sometimes tender, often full of heartache and anything but simple or sweet. They are not what they seem, and they seem bottomless. RJ SMITH

LIKE THIS?
TRY THESE!

>> LED ZEPPELIN
LED ZEPPELIN III ATLANTIC

>> THE DIRTBOMBS
ULTRAGLIDE IN BLACK IN THE RED



For us? Really?
Well, thank you. . .

BLENDER'S PROMOTIONAL SECTION

GUEST LIST

THESE GUYS
ARE ALWAYS
"ON THE LIST"



SHURE

SHURE'S NEWEST MUSICIANS' EARS

Shure's new E2c is a studio-quality, in-ear earphone designed for the professional musician, but now available for you to own. The E2c offers high-energy driver technology, isolation, personalized comfort and portability.

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THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES



In Brooklyn, even the pep squad is scary.

ON TRACK

New York's most joyful punks riff and roar through debut album

THE YEAH YEAH YEAHS

FEVER TO TELL ★★★★★

INTERSCOPE

NEW YORK ROCK is usually just a few degrees short of icy: Think of Lou Reed wearing sunglasses indoors, at night, with the Velvet Underground; Debbie Harry going Nordic-peroxide to front Blondie; and the Strokes skinning punk rock for its tangled hair and leather-jacket cool.

But from their triply enthusiastic name to their careening, elemental art-punk, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs are more like an ancient, hissing radiator: noisy and boiling.

The songs on *Fever to Tell* swerve like they're being followed by the police, constantly changing and transforming. Singer Karen O, a downtown girl-power fashion plate known for her vivid, scissored stage outfits, uses choppy, unbound melody lines and a vocabulary of nasal howls, yelps, whispers and guttural coos.

The lyrics give clues to her excitement without resolving its mystery: "We're high in the back room"; "Boy, you're just a stupid bitch"; "We could do it to each other/Like a sister and a

brother." The Yeah Yeah Yeahs most resemble New Yorkers of an earlier era, the Beat poets of the '50s, who valued sensation over clarity.

This great sound starts with the Raincoats, the Slits and other post-punk Brit experimenters, then adds extra distortion. There's no bassist in the trio, so drummer Brian Chase subdivides the beat restlessly, briefly slipping a disco pulse into "Date With a Night," and pinkie-thin guitarist Nick Zinner laces songs with fast surf riffs, low bursts and armor-piercing drones that resemble satellite broadcasts. They have to race just to keep up with Karen O's whirlwind personality.

And she's more than just the most impulsive performer in years, as apt to pour beer on herself as hand a microphone to girls in the pit. Late in the record, she sings "Maps," a tense ballad full of hopeful tenderness and attachment: "Wait, they don't love you like I love you." Even when the buzz-bomb riffs stop flying, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs still spray their spirit like a firehose. **ROB TANNENBAUM**

NICK ZINNER'S
CURRENT LISTENING

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY
THE PEEL SESSIONS UNIVERSAL

THE LOCUST
FLIGHT OF THE WOUNDED GOLD STANDARD

RINGO STARR

RINGO RAMA ★★

KOCH

Former Beatles drummer has learned some new licks but could still use singing lessons

Nearly 40 years after John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote "I Wanna Be Your Man" for him on the second Beatles album, Ringo Starr still sounds like the lucky schmo at the edge of the stage in whose beaming face the star whimsically sticks his microphone for a few bars. Absolutely bursting with Beatles references, featuring cameos by everyone from Willie Nelson to Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour, *Ringo Rama* often feels overproduced in a way that George Harrison's no less bombastic later albums never did. Surrounded at all times by great hordes of collaborators and accompanists, the old groaner nonetheless pulls off "Imagine Me There" and "What Love Wants to Be," two genuinely lovely odes to devotion.

JOHN MENDELSON

THE STRATFORD 4

LOVE AND DISTORTION ★★

JETSET

Shoegazing San Francisco quartet masters the dreamy 2 A.M. drone

These subtly rebellious rockers (they claim their name comes from a hedonistic French revolutionary, and they titled their debut *The Revolt Against Tired Noises*) take their cues from the British noise-pop of the late '90s, but their songs belong to a genre all its own: Call it dreamcore. Wailing, distorted guitars and jumpy backbeats deliver messages of escape, refuge and, ultimately, sweet hope. On "The Simple Things Are Taking Over," crescendos of crashing sound serve up lyrics about staying home at night. "Telephone," an eight-minute-plus workout that pays tribute to the band's influences by name (Spacemen 3, Primal Scream, T. Rex, Belle and Sebastian), ends up as a tribute to the power of the telephone — and motherly love. Even rebellious rockers love their mamas.

JOHN DONOHUE

I LOVE THIS CD!



JAMIE KENNEDY
STAR OF MALIBU'S MOST WANTED

JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A. CONSPIRACY
ATLANTIC

"I listen to *Conspiracy* at least once a week. It's got the sickest beat. It makes me feel like I'm on the inside!"

SYSTEMATIC

PLEASURE TO BURN ★

ELEKTRA

On second disc, California metalheads feel sorry for themselves, forget to write actual songs

It's tough to tell what's worse about this East Bay foursome. Is it their slick, stiff plagiarism of Alice in Chains' tortured yelping and muddy sonics? Or their reliance on modern metal's cardinal clichés: self-hatred posing as regret and misogyny masquerading as girl trouble? "How does it feel to be infected with me?" bellows singer-guitarist Tim Narducci over equally blustery drums and bass in "Infected." Quite like a bad cold, it turns out: The draggy rhythms and guitar-whiz riffing that dominate Systematic's second album (the first was released on Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich's failed label) can cause wooziness and, occasionally, earaches. Even the headbanging pleasure burns off quickly. Four songs in, the disc collapses into a stretch of monster ballads as insubstantial and colorless as ash.

NICK CATUCCI

RICHARD THOMPSON

THE OLD KIT BAG ★★★★★

COOKING VINYL/SPINART

In 30-plus years as a solo artist, the British folk-rock guitarist and Jedi Master has never sounded better

OLD DUDE MAKES GOOD

If you're still standing after hearing the cryptic, alternately chilling and exultantly gorgeous "Gethsemane," you won't be after Richard

Thompson's exhilaratingly maniacal guitar work in "Jealous Words." And those are only the first two tracks. "I'll Tag Along," a celebration of debauchery, sets a new standard for homages to the guitar-based rock & roll of the '50s. The pure pop of "She Said It Was Destiny" is entirely irresistible. And you've never heard a more gorgeous expression of romantic resignation than the bluesy "I've Got No Right to Have It All." Of the nearly 59 minutes of music here, about 40 induce deep pleasure.

JOHN MENDELSON

THROWING MUSES

THROWING MUSES ★★★★★

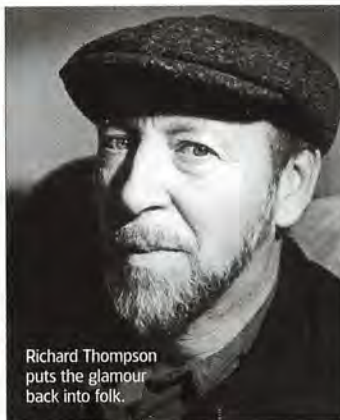
KRISTIN HERSH

THE GROTTO ★★★★★

4AD

New group and solo releases from Boston's alt-rock Sylvia Plath

Kristin Hersh's group Throwing Muses arrived too early. Hailing from the same late-'80s Boston scene that produced the Pixies' demented surf-rock, their



Richard Thompson puts the glamour back into folk.

taut, nervy rhythms, coupled with Hersh's insular, aggravated worldview, inspired a generation of Lilith Fair-style female singer-songwriters (Ani DiFranco, Alanis Morissette). Muses split for financial reasons in 1997 after seven studio albums. This return, which Hersh calls "quick and dirty," is just as electrifying as before. It's also just as skewed ("Pandora's Box") and urgent ("Civil Disobedience"), and the lineup even includes original member Tanya Donnelly. *The Grotto*, meanwhile, is Hersh's fifth solo album: sweet, spooky harmonies, partly inspired by the death of a close relative, given a naked acoustic production. With her unusual view of domesticity, she sings about snowmobiles ("Sno Cat") and feeding the kids ("Amica Montana").

EVERETT TRUE

SOOZIE TYRELL

WHITE LINES ★★★★★

TREASURE

Bruce Springsteen's fiddle player debuts, 20 years too late to be current

Today's category: Female Fiddlers with Famous Employers. The violin gypsy in Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue? That would be Scarlet Rivera. *Lonesome Jubilee*-era John Mellencamp? A big

hand for Lisa Germano. And for *The Rising* album and tour, Bruce Springsteen brought Soozie Tyrell's violin front and center. But Tyrell is no rookie — she has been a top-call session player for more than two decades, and now she makes her debut as a leader with *White Lines*. Tyrell's pleasantly throaty voice makes for some memorable moments — especially "Out on Bleeker Street" and the autobiographical title track, featuring her boss, the Boss. Unfortunately, *White Lines* suffers from indistinct songwriting and overblown '80s-style arrangements — as a studio ace, Tyrell hasn't yet figured out how to use her hard-earned time in the spotlight.

ALAN LIGHT

VARIOUS ARTISTS

GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY: THE GOSPEL SONGS OF BOB DYLAN ★★★★★

COLUMBIA

Gospel greats serve up sanctified Zimmy. Can they get a hallelujah?

When Bob Dylan declared himself born again in 1979, fans were as shocked as when he went electric in '65. *Gotta Serve Somebody*, however, is a revelation. The Christian material that came off as preachy and vaguely ironic on *Slow Train* Coming and 1980's *Saved* is redeemed and glorified by gospel stars Shirley Caesar

("Gotta Serve Somebody"), the Fairfield Four ("Are You Ready?") and the Chicago Mass Choir ("Pressing On"). And after the corniest introduction in gospel-rock history, Dylan, who's still as much about Saturday-night revelry as Sunday-morning penitence, joins 62-year-old R&B growler Mavis Staples to

ASTONISHING FACT! >>>
When SOOZIE TYRELL was 16, she ate an entire box of 12 Krispy Kreme doughnuts in under 10 minutes on a bet. She hasn't eaten a single one since.

grind out "Gonna Change My Way of Thinking" as a down-and-dirty blues.

RICHARD GEHR

M. WARD

TRANSFIGURATION OF VINCENT ★★★★★

MERGE

Alt-country oddball from Portland, Oregon, makes loneliness sound lovely

GREAT BUMMED-OUT SONG-WRITER

In M. Ward's songs, misery is so routine it's almost cozy. The first line on his third album is "He only sings when he's sad, and he's sad all the time," which pretty much sums up his world of loneliness, quiet despair and longing to escape. Ward is a considerate guy; just when things get bleak, he offers a homey instrumental. His plaintive, smoky whisper and unembroidered lyrics hint at Neil Young and Steve Forbert, while his lo-fi tunes — with folk guitar picking, parlor-piano melodies and occasional shuffling drums — put him in the vicinity of Wilco and Palace. Yet as familiar as alt-country has become, Ward makes it worthwhile again, because his songs completely sidestep self-pity. They're about seeing the pain more clearly, the better to endure it.

JON PARELES

LIZZIE WEST

HOLY ROAD ★★★★★

WARNER BROS.

New York singer, 29, gives blood to gentle girl-folk-rock

A product of the New York folk circuit, Lizzie West seems to be just another demure female songwriter. Scratch the surface, though, and this Walt Whitman fan offers a lot more. With disarming conviction, *Holy Road* touches on serenity, gospel and downright weirdness. If "Dusty Turnaround" exudes childlike innocence, on "I Miss You, Baby" ("Go on touch me baby/And use those hands"), West sounds like Natalie Merchant with meat scraps in her teeth. And she has even more tricks up her sleeve: Twisted but eerily brilliant, "Monkey Back Blues" wanders, with its eyes shut tight, into Mary Margaret O'Hara territory. Only occasionally does West's music resemble generic Lilith Fair output — but otherwise, she gleefully subverts it.

NICK DUERDEN

WHIRLWIND HEAT

DO RABBITS WONDER? ★★★★★

THIRD MAN/V2

Michigan trio launches Jack White's new label with lamest post-punk

Give Whirlwind Heat this: The first time out, they've managed to sound



Lizzie West: OK, sure, we'll have a nap now.

YORN AGAIN

Scruffy singer-songwriter re-creates the heyday of California rock

PETE YORN

DAY I FORGOT ★★

COLUMBIA

▶▶ PETE YORN'S *music for the morning after* went gold last year on its old-is-new vibe of solid but imperfect rock: guitars and drums kicking and cooing without space-age airs, synth maneuvers or any other post-1974 inventions. Although he presented himself as a singer-songwriter, it was the craggy charisma of his music that won Yorn a fan club. His rough-hewn voice was the sound of many missed shaves.

On the first eight songs of *Day I Forgot*, Yorn — raised in New Jersey but making music in L.A. — drives home the same approach, now at a higher speed. Emotionally, he shuns complication. In "Crystal Village," a relationship appears better and more truthful now that it's over; in "Committed" his friends flake on him or outright lie.

But the sound of these songs, produced by Scott Litt (R.E.M.), is

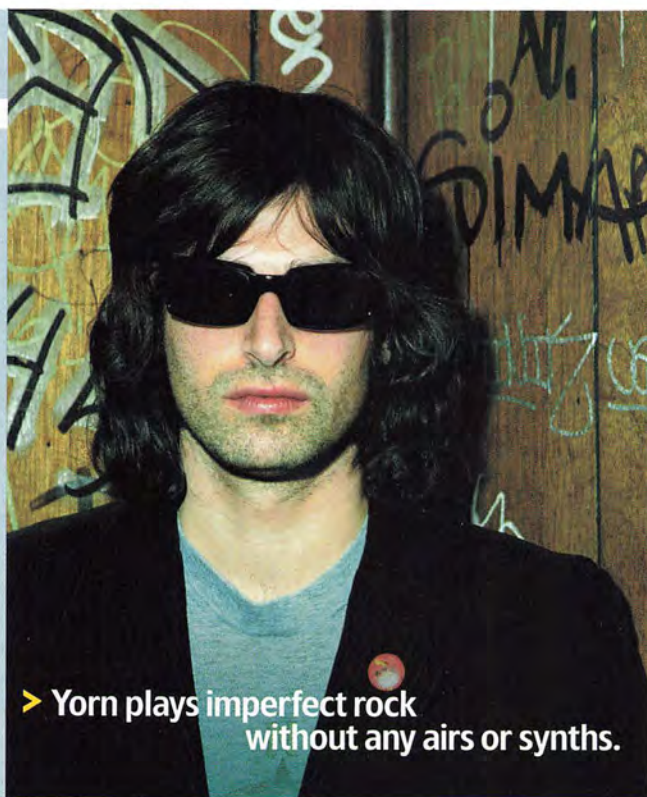
something else entirely: a whiz-bang jukebox of state-of-the-art West Coast scruff-rock. In "Crystal Village," Yorn, accompanied by fast guitar tinklings, alternates sweet choruses with exploding verses where the guitars turn snarl-ish, as if airlifted in from metal sessions.

Between "Carlos (Don't Let It Go to Your Head)," an unmelodic romantic obsession which recalls the Smiths, and "Burrito," which whips around with Ramones-like velocity, *Day I Forgot* keeps bearing down and stretching out. The music is a fond remembrance of L.A. rock, as heard on a summer afternoon before MTV. As the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac plot reunion tours with their accountants, and Tom Petty turns into a scolding pope of rock virtue, Yorn plays the game with smarts, vigor and a minimum of razors. JAMES HUNTER

PETE YORN'S CURRENT LISTENING

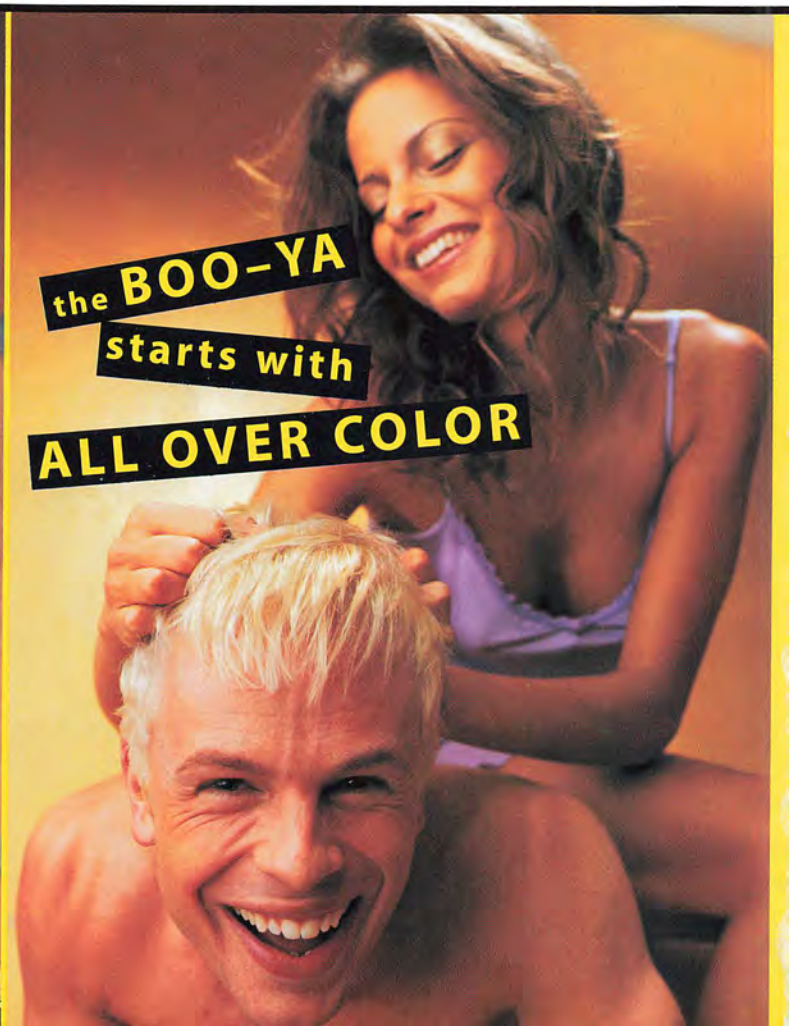
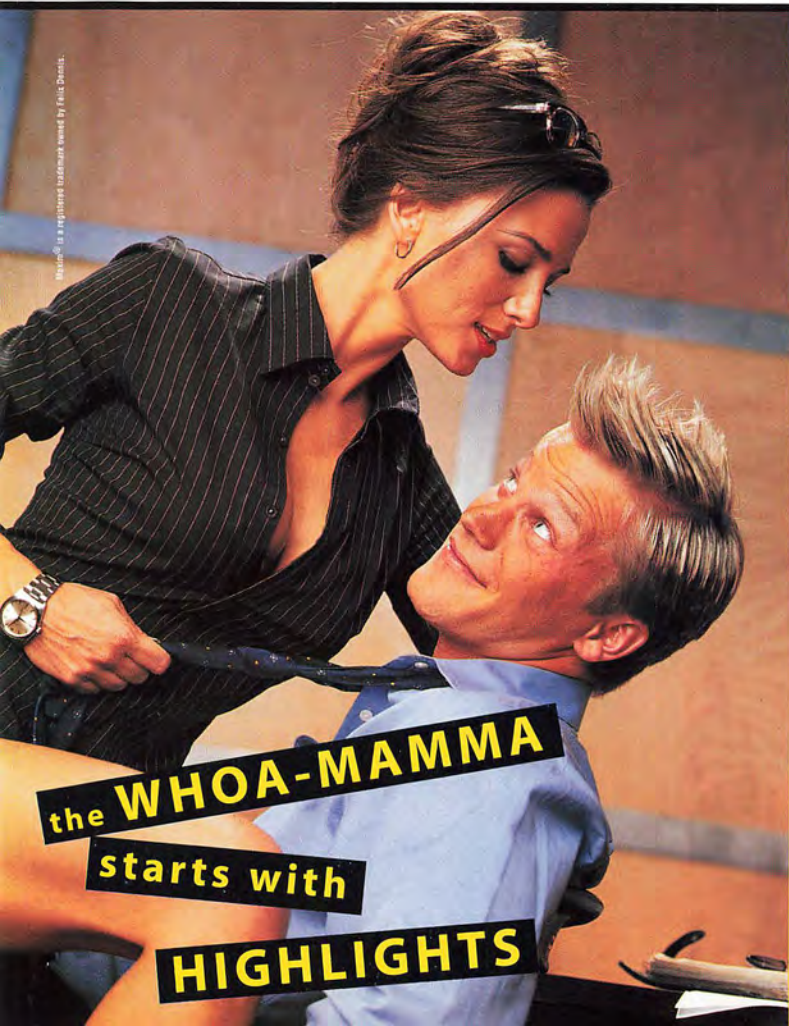
▶ THE STOOGES
THE STOOGES ELEKTRA

▶ THE CLIENTELE
SUBURBAN LIGHT MERGE



▶ Yorn plays imperfect rock without any airs or synths.

Jasper James/Reina Ltd



exactly like the worst bands downtown New York coughed up in 1982 — complete with obnoxious Anglophile vocals, jerky bass lines and a Moog that sounds like they spilled a bottle of Coke on it and are wiping it off with an egg beater. Sneering affectedly, David Swanson shrieks inane mantras; his voice clearly fascinates him, which makes one of us. Each song is named for a different color, but *Rabbits* is drab monochrome making for the longest half-hour you'll suffer since last night's *Friends*.

JONAH WEINER

WAYNE WONDER

NO HOLDING BACK ☆☆

VP/ATLANTIC

Dancehall reggae singer gets overslick

These days, dancehall reggae acts flop onto the shores of American hip-hop like jellyfish. This slick, 36-year-old crooner scored a sizeable hit last year with "No Letting Go," a fetching love song that paired his accented tenor with rough, digital funk. When Wonder sticks to that formula, the contrast works well: "Bounce Along" marries his eager, flushed voice to a quick-stepping hand-clap shuffle for the Jamaican equivalent of New Jack Swing. But when he defers

to demure synthesized pianos and strings, turning into a traditional lover-man, it's the schmaltzy stuff of bad talent shows. Beachcombers would be wise to toss this one back in.

JOSEPH PATEL

YO LA TENGO

SUMMER SUN ☆☆☆

MATADOR

Indie heroes from New Jersey get all warm n' fuzzy on their twelfth CD

How cool are Yo La Tengo? One word: *flutes*. Yo La Tengo are so cool they've made a record with flutes, bongos, organ and vibes on it, and it doesn't sound retro or cocktail at all. They sound comfortable in their own skin — and able to get under yours. The Yolas — guitarist Ira Kaplan, drummer Georgia Hubley and bassist James McNew — have recorded 12 albums, none terribly like the others. The mood of "Season of the Shark" and "Little Eyes" is gentle, friendly and soothing, like friends sitting on the beach playing to the waves. In its title, "Let's Be Still" sums up their approach here. Next time, they'll probably wail, but this gentle stroke sure is sweet.

RJ SMITH

Blender Approved

The best new releases of the last three months



50 CENT

GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'

SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE

Turn on your radio for an hour and you're bound to hear "In da Club" more times than 50 Cent has been shot. *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* is menacing gangsta rap with a candy-hook coating.



LIL' KIM

LA BELLA MAFIA

QUEEN BEE/ATLANTIC

Downplaying her nymphomania, rap's self-described "Playboy pinup girl" adopts mentor Biggie Smalls's husky cadence on these Eastern-tinged club jams. "Jump Off" is a highlight.

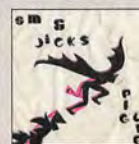


THE LIBERTINES

UP THE BRACKET

ROUGH TRADE

Not since the Clash has a band so precisely evoked London's grime and thrill: You can smell booze on the breath of "The Boy Looked at Johnny." And they claim to be ex-male prostitutes to boot!

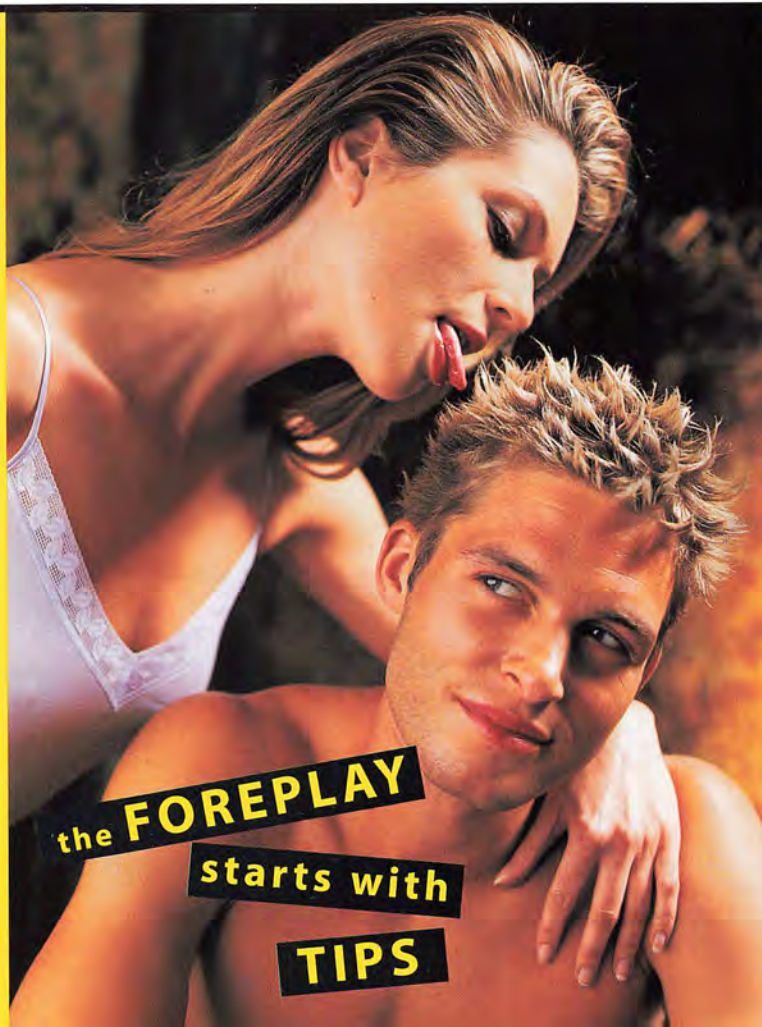


STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS

PIG LIB

MATADOR

A terrific record of choogling and tender tunes: Fifteen years after founding Pavement, Stephen Malkmus, the indie-rock mastermind, finally finds his band.



the **FOREPLAY**
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TIPS

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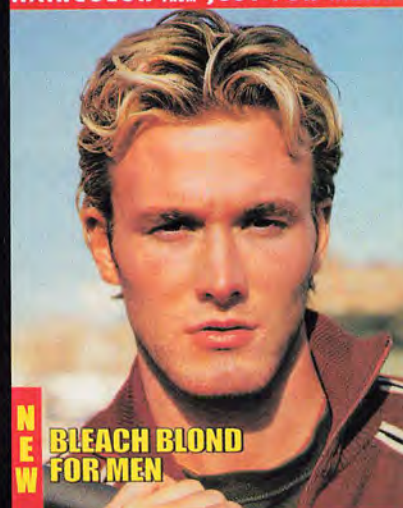
Good Enough

To Be Called

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Highlights

Tips

THE 40

MOST POPULAR SONGS IN AMERICA

Evanscence climb on top of Madonna? Only on the chart, of course. Phew!

Why, it's the chart!

6



2 EVANESCENCE "BRING ME TO LIFE" FALLEN

The major-label debut from Arkansas's goth-tinged answer to Linkin Park shot straight into the Top 10 the first week of its release — thanks in large part to this single's prominent placement on the *Daredevil* soundtrack. On May 10, the quartet will appear at Houston's Edgefest radio festival, kicking off a series of high-profile, modern-rock radio-station gigs.



Jennifer Lopez tips her hat to the gift of music.

HOW WE DID IT >>>>

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay, and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com. "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."



POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"SOMEWHERE I BELONG"	LINKIN PARK	METEORA WARNER BROS.
2	"BRING ME TO LIFE"	EVANESCENCE	FALLEN WIND-UP
3	"AMERICAN LIFE"	MADONNA	AMERICAN LIFE MAYNARD/WARNER BROS.
4	"CLOCKS"	COLDPLAY	A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD CAPITOL
5	"IGNITION"	R. KELLY	CHOCOLATE FACTORY JIVE
6	"21 QUESTIONS"	50 CENT FEAT. NATE DOGG	GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN' SHADY/AFRIMATH/INTERSCOPE
7	"STRAIGHT OUT OF LINE"	GODSMACK	FACELESS REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL
8	"ROCK YOUR BODY"	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE	JUSTIFIED JIVE
9	"LANDSLIDE"	DIXIE CHICKS	HOME OPEN WIDE/MONUMENT/COLUMBIA
10	"I DROVE ALL NIGHT"	CÉLINE DION	ONE HEART EPIC
11	"GET BUSY"	SEAN PAUL	DUTTY ROCK VIRIATLANTIC
12	"PICTURE"	KID ROCK FEAT. SHERYL CROW	COCKY LAVA/ATLANTIC
13	"THE ANTHEM"	GOOD CHARLOTTE	THE YOUNG & THE HOPELESS DAYLIGHT/EPIC
14	"LIKE A STONE"	AUDIOSLAVE	AUDIOSLAVE INTERSCOPE/EPIC
15	"COME AWAY WITH ME"	NORAH JONES	COME AWAY WITH ME BLUE NOTE
16	"HELL YEAH"	GINUWINE FEAT. BABY	THE SENIOR EPIC
17	"FIGHTER"	CHRISTINA AGUILERA	STRIPPED RCA
18	"ALL THAT JAZZ"	CATHERINE ZETA-JONES	CHICAGO ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK/EPIC
19	"GOSSIP FOLKS"	MISSY ELLIOTT FEAT. LUDACRIS	UNDER CONSTRUCTION GOLD/MINI/ELEKTRA
20	"PEACEKEEPER"	FLEETWOOD MAC	SAY YOU WILL REPRISE
21	"SING FOR THE MOMENT"	EMINEM	THE EMINEM SHOW AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
22	"ALL I HAVE"	JENNIFER LOPEZ FEAT. LL COOL J	THIS IS ME... THEN EPIC
23	"THE REMEDY (I WON'T WORRY)"	JASON MRAZ	WAITING FOR MY ROCKET TO COME/ELEKTRA
24	"LOSING GRIP"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	LET GO ARISTA
25	"SLEEPING AWAKE"	P.O.D.	THE MATRIX RELOADED ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK/WARNERS
26	"BEAUTIFUL"	SNOOP DOGG	PAID THA COST TO BE DA BOSS PRIORITY/CAPITOL
27	"MISS YOU"	AALIYAH	I CARE 4 U BLACKGROUNDS/UNIVERSAL
28	"WHY GEORGIA"	JOHN MAYER	ROOM FOR SQUARES AWARE/COLUMBIA
29	"GIRL'S NOT GREY"	A.F.I.	SING THE SORROW DREAMWORKS
30	"PIMP JUICE"	NELLY	NELLYVILLE FO/REEL/UNIVERSAL
31	"FEEL"	ROBBIE WILLIAMS	ESCAPOLOGY VIRGIN
32	"SEND THE PAIN BELOW"	CHEVELLE	WONDER WHAT'S NEXT EPIC
33	"HOW YOU GONNA ACT LIKE THAT"	TYRESE	I WANNA GO THERE J RECORDS
34	"UNWELL"	MATCHBOX TWENTY	MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU ARE/ATLANTIC
35	"DAMAGED"	TLC	3D LA FACE/ARISTA
36	"SEVEN NATION ARMY"	THE WHITE STRIPES	ELEPHANT THIRD MAN/V2
37	"GIRLFRIEND"	B2K	PANDEMONIUM EPIC
38	"WHEN I'M GONE"	3 DOORS DOWN	AWAY FROM THE SUN REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL
39	"I CAN"	NAS	GOD'S SON COLUMBIA
40	"SICK OF BEING LONELY"	FIELD MOB	FROM THA ROOTA TO THA TOOTA MCA

3 MADONNA "AMERICAN LIFE" AMERICAN LIFE

With her customary fanfare, the most famous woman in the world returns. A Jonas Åkerlund-directed video heralds *American Life*, her first album since 2000's double-platinum *Music*.



The clip's high fashion/antiwar theme has already caused a bit of a stir, as did her kooky, Kabbalah-tinged video for the James Bond film *Die Another Day*. What's next for Madge? Authoring a children's book. Of course!

15 NORAH JONES "COME AWAY WITH ME" COME AWAY WITH ME

Her album's Grammy sweep (eight awards, including Best Album) ensured Jones's debut would sell like crazy — more than 600,000 copies since February — and she



could leave behind her one-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn. While this gentle title track lays waste to adult-contemporary radio, Jones will record a new album in May, then start a summer tour on June 6.

20 FLEETWOOD MAC "PEACEKEEPER" SAY YOU WILL

Pared down to a quartet — keyboardist-vocalist Christine McVie left in 2000 — the most soap-opera band of the '70s will appear on *The Tonight Show* on April 23



and 24 to promote their first album in 16 years. The mammoth summer tour begins May 7.

23 JASON MRAZ "THE REMEDY (I WON'T WORRY)" WAITING FOR MY ROCKET TO COME

In the wake of John Mayer comes Mechanicsville, Virginia's Mraz, another sprightly, acoustic guitar-toting heartthrob. This coffeehouse-friendly single was the second most-added song on adult-contemporary radio upon its release.





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05/10: Sunrise, FL

05/11: Tampa, FL
05/13: Orlando, FL
05/14: Birmingham, AL
05/15: New Orleans, LA
05/16: Houston, TX
05/17: Dallas, TX
05/18: San Antonio, TX
05/20: St. Louis, MO

05/21: Kansas City, MO
05/22: Lincoln, NE
05/23: Denver, CO
05/26: Seattle, WA
05/27: Portland, OR
05/28: Boise, ID
05/29: Salt Lake City, UT
05/30: Las Vegas, NV

05/31: San Jose, CA
06/01: Bakersfield, CA
06/03: Phoenix, AZ
06/04: Irvine, CA
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06/06: San Diego, CA
06/07: Los Angeles, CA

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Up Against A Wall

Plagued by depression, this folk-pop misfit lived in darkness

NICK DRAKE

FIVE LEAVES LEFT ★★★★★

BRYTER LAYTER ★★★★★

PINK MOON ★★★★★

WAY TO BLUE: AN INTRODUCTION
TO NICK DRAKE ★★★★★

EPIC



THE VERY MODEL of a doomed romantic amiss in pop music, Nick Drake died in 1974, when he was only 26, and left behind a slender body of work. During his lifetime, the Englishman's records were virtually ignored, and he believed himself a failure.

But his fame began to grow almost from the moment of his death. His disciples and champions include Elton John, Lucinda Williams, R.E.M. and the Red Hot Chili Peppers; critics hear his influence in Cat Power's choked confessions and in Beck's maudlin post-breakup musings. To his devotees, Drake's three albums are among the most beautiful recordings ever made.



Nick Drake serenades a tree. The tree sobs.

A soft mist of melancholy covers his jazzy folk-pop. Drake had a high, fragile voice, and his acoustic-guitar playing was skillful and original. His records are mostly bare of embellishment, except for occasional string arrangements or the careful backup characteristic of British folkies.

The irony of his mournful story is that on the face of things, Drake had it all. Raised in a comfortable corner of Shakespeare's native region, he received a privileged education and was loved by all who knew him. He was tall and stooping, handsome and elegant in a careless, aristocratic way. But he seems to have found the world a puzzling place, too rushed and ugly for his sensitive soul. These reissued albums chart the sad decline of a boy who became, in one of his typically vulnerable lyrics, "a soul with no footprint."

On a tip from British folk-rock greats Fairport Convention, the London-based American producer Joe Boyd signed Drake and helped make his 1968 debut, *Five Leaves Left*. Its title refers to a reminder printed on packages of rolling papers, and it gives a clue to the languid pace and gentle disposition of the songs. But the newcomer was the antithesis of a giggling stoner — the album starts with a reference to his "troubled mind." And "River Man," "Way to Blue" and "Fruit Tree," each an exploration of loneliness and doubt, are as serious and considered as they are seductively melodic. Briefly optimistic, Drake dropped out of Cambridge University and moved to the big city.

From 1970, *Bryter Layter* is considered Drake's "London album," and it offers a fuller sound and a more insistent feel. "Poor Boy" is even lighthearted in its self-awareness, using the soul star Doris Troy to add a mocking refrain: "Oh, poor boy/So sorry for himself." Humor aside, the singer really was suffering, traumatized by what he considered the failure of his infrequent performances and an increasing sense of isolation. Recorded in just two late-night sessions, his third and



Nick Drake, violent prankster, about to stick out his right leg

final album, 1972's *Pink Moon*, was even starker than its predecessors — both in its bare-bones sound and in the depressive clouds of its lyrics. With its spare, gently foreboding imagery, the brief title track is oddly pretty, and its use in a 2000 Volkswagen TV ad gave Drake's music the largest exposure it had ever had.

After recording *Pink Moon*, Drake withdrew further, underwent a spell of psychiatric treatment and lost interest in his musical career. Despite some favorable reviews, his albums' poor sales convinced him that the struggle was hopeless.



He returned to his parents' home in the English countryside. Two years later, he was found there, dead from an overdose of the antidepressant Tryptizol. His death was officially ruled a suicide, a judgment his family contested.

Before Drake died, he made one last attempt to record, and at his final session he sang a stark, mumbled scrap called "Black Eyed Dog." It's the bleakest thing he ever recorded: "A black-eyed dog, he called at my door/A black-eyed dog, he called for more. . . I'm growing old and I want to go home." In interviews, Peter

Buck of R.E.M. has drawn a parallel between Drake's later compositions and the music of fabled Delta bluesman Robert Johnson, who moaned about the hellhound on his trail. (Like Drake, Johnson died at 26.)

Before he retreated from public view, Drake made three albums of exquisite

grace. To sample the flavor of each, and for rarities including "Black Eyed Dog," novices should check out the remastered compilation *Way to Blue* (originally released in 1994), an excellent introduction that collects such gems as "Time Has Told Me," "Pink Moon" and "One of These Things First."

There have always been singer-songwriters whose penchant for pain looks like tedious self-indulgence. But such misjudgments drove Nick Drake to despair. To make them again would be another tragedy. PAUL DU NOYER

Two years after his last album, Drake was found dead from an overdose of antidepressants.



AC/DC

HIGH VOLTAGE ★★★★★

HIGHWAY TO HELL ★★★★★

BACK IN BLACK ★★★★★

DIRTY DEEDS DONE

DIRTY CHEAP ★★★★★

AC/DC LIVE ★★★★★

EPIC

Remastered metal monomania from sex-obsessed Aussies

Fewer than 90 seconds into "It's a Long Way to the Top," the first tune on AC/DC's 1976 U.S. debut, *High Voltage*,

THE SCORE >>

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK

bagpipes begin to drone. Having pioneered the use of traditional Scottish instruments in hard rock, the fivesome from Australia instantly renounced innovation and never gave another thought to "artistic growth." The signature stayed pure: guitars distorted, vocals even more distorted, songs full of phallic metaphors and VD references. *Highway to Hell*, from 1979, and its successors, *Back in Black* and *Dirty Deeds*, broke their devilish humor into the mainstream, thanks to "You Shook Me All Night Long" and similar shout-worthy rockers. Fast-living singer Bon Scott died of alcohol poisoning in 1980. Replacing his troglodyte wit, Brian Johnson shrieks like his fingernails are being ripped out, and on 1992's *Live*, he cedes the spotlight to Angus Young's ecstatic, staccato guitar riffs.

ROB KEMP

BORN AGAINST

PATRIOTIC BATTLE HYMNS

★★★★

THE REBEL SOUND OF SHIT AND FAILURE ★★★★★

KILL ROCK STARS

Volatile political punk from early-'90s New York on two handy discs

For just a few years before they fell apart in 1994, New York's Born Against

made the most ferocious politico-religio-socio-absurdist punk since the Dead Kennedys. With wildly ranting but still cogent lyrics screamed from deep in the throat by Sam McPheeters, Adam Nathanson's F-16-in-flight guitar and subversive clip-art CD covers (by McPheeters, now with the avant-pranksters Men's Recovery Project), they sustained activism at a time when punk became depoliticized. Born Against's two albums — combined on *Patriotic Battle Hymns*, with *Rebel Sound* offering a vast collection of miscellany — are a vital but little-recognized link in the great chain of politically charged punk between Minor Threat and Propagandhi. Best song title: "Jock Gestapo."

BEN SISARIO

JOHNNY CASH

JOHNNY CASH IS COMING TO TOWN/BOOM CHICK A BOOM ★★★★★

WATER FROM THE WELLS OF HOME ★★

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE ★★★★★

MERCURY

Four forgotten albums full of nostalgia, humor and Jesus

Along with *Classic Cash*, a late-'80s album of remakes, these reissues repre-



AC/DC's Angus Young, confused about the location of the highway to hell

sent Johnny Cash's brief association with Mercury Records, which occurred between his split with Columbia and 1994's Rick Rubin-produced comeback. Not Cash's finest period, it was still more substantive than the kitschy patriotism and theme records that typified his '70s output. While completely nonessential and slowed by dated arrangements, each contains a few minor pleasures, from goofy ditties ("Farmer's Almanac") to likeable retreads of Sun Records-era hits ("Hey Porter"). *Coming to Town/Boom Chick A*

NO RESERVATIONS

Forty years of crass and ass from a plastic-surgery legend

CHER

THE VERY BEST OF CHER ★★★★★

WARNER BROS.

>> ON A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA afternoon in 1963, short, ambitious songwriter Sonny Bono introduced 17-year-old Armenian-Cherokee singer Cherilyn Sarkisian La Pierre to his mentor, producer Phil Spector. A canny teen-pop genius with a knack for puppeteering young female talent, Spector gave Bono's willowy gal pal a crack at a soapy Beatlemania novelty called "Ringo I Love You."

Released under the name Bonnie Jo Mason, the song rightly flopped. But both men saw that La Pierre had the makings of a pop idol: a smoldering sensuality, a voice full with melodrama and — this is paramount — an ability to sing any old piece of crap as if her supper depended on it.

Protest folk, big-screen AM pop, disco, lite metal, Eurocheese: In her remarkable five-decade career, Cher never met a disparaged genre she didn't want to hump. Like most divas, she has relied on male writers and producers,

and has become far better known for her Olympian displays of vulgar taste and celebrity vanity than for her musical (or acting) ability. But as drag queens around the world know, there's no point separating Cher from her bad taste; it has made her an imperishable star. And it propels this overdue 21-song retrospective, the first to compile hits from each phase of her long-running love affair with tackiness.

Cher matched her instincts to changing trends. In the early '70s, she pumped out her best work, the irresistible outcast trilogy "Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves," "Half-Breed" and "Dark Lady." In 1979, with disco in full bloom, she released the lovely, horny twirler "Take Me Home." In the late '80s, she found kindred spirits in the big-haired girl-boys of pop-metal and scored a comeback with the ass-y MTV hit "If I Could Turn Back Time."

Even last year, Cher wouldn't let up: "Song for the Lonely," from 2002, pays maudlin tribute to the heroes of, yes, September 11. Nouvelle vulgarians Shania Twain and Christina Aguilera still have sooo much to learn. CRAIG MARKS



Cher: "This is the strangest bikini wax I've ever had!"

From top: David Corio/Retna Ltd., Neal Preston/Corbis

Boom, combining two LPs on one disc, is the most eccentric, with a couple of Elvis Costello covers strewn among tales of seeing Hank Williams and Willie Nelson play. *Water* is full of amiable duets that sound as though they were more fun to record than they are to hear — except for one with Paul McCartney, who's clearly cowed by the legend at his side. *Mystery* is the most coherent, beginning by describing Jesus as a cowboy and ending with the bonus track "The Wanderer," a techno-spooky religious allegory recorded with U2.

JOHN DEFORE

FISHBONE

THE ESSENTIAL FISHBONE ★★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Lloyd Dobler's favorite band left a fun, sweaty legacy

Fishbone weren't just the prototypical funk-rock-ska mash-up band — they drew the blueprint that No Doubt (and, in diluted form, Sugar Ray) are still using today. *Essential* tracks the band's decade-long evolution from frenetic ska outfit to Funkadelic-like big-band rock outfit. Early party songs ("Party at Ground Zero") obscured the group's versatile musicianship and social consciousness, both of which bloomed later on "Everyday Sunshine," a celebratory ode to Sly & the Family Stone, and the rebellious anthem "Fight the Youth." The vaudevillian crooning of singer Angelo Moore could be sweet, biting and witty — usually all at once — and his theatrics helped make Fishbone affable. It also masked their lack of hooks. This collection stops before the band's ultimate fade into obscurity, leaving its coolness intact.

JOSEPH PATEL

LOVE

THE BEST OF LOVE ★★★★★

ELEKTRA/RHINO

The beginner's guide to an unpredictable hippie wizard

Love never stood still. Piloted by Arthur Lee, a black man in Los

Angeles's white pop scene, the group debuted with *Love*, a folk-rock album that owed everything to the Byrds. Then they adopted other strategies. Equally capable of hysterical garage-punk and smooth crooning, Lee brought jazzy hues to Love's wild-eyed follow-up, *Da Capo*, featuring the fast, trippy "Seven & Seven Is." But unlike some of his contemporaries, Lee was more than just a hippie mystic. On Love's 1967 masterwork, the aptly titled *Forever Changes*, Lee highlighted strings and brass, unplugging for "You Set the Scene" and other haunting excursions. Amid the shifting styles and mood swings of this generous 22-track set, Lee's possessed vocals convey emotional extremes, channeling a drug casualty in the stark "Signed D.C.," luxuriating in mystic poetry on the swirling "She Comes in Colors" and attacking militarism via the ominous "Live and Let Live." Update: After serving time in jail on gun charges in the '90s, Lee has returned to live performance, offering a chance to experience a legend worthy of the hype.

JON YOUNG

THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL

HUMS OF THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL ★★★★★

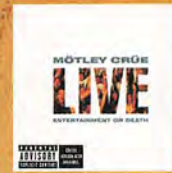
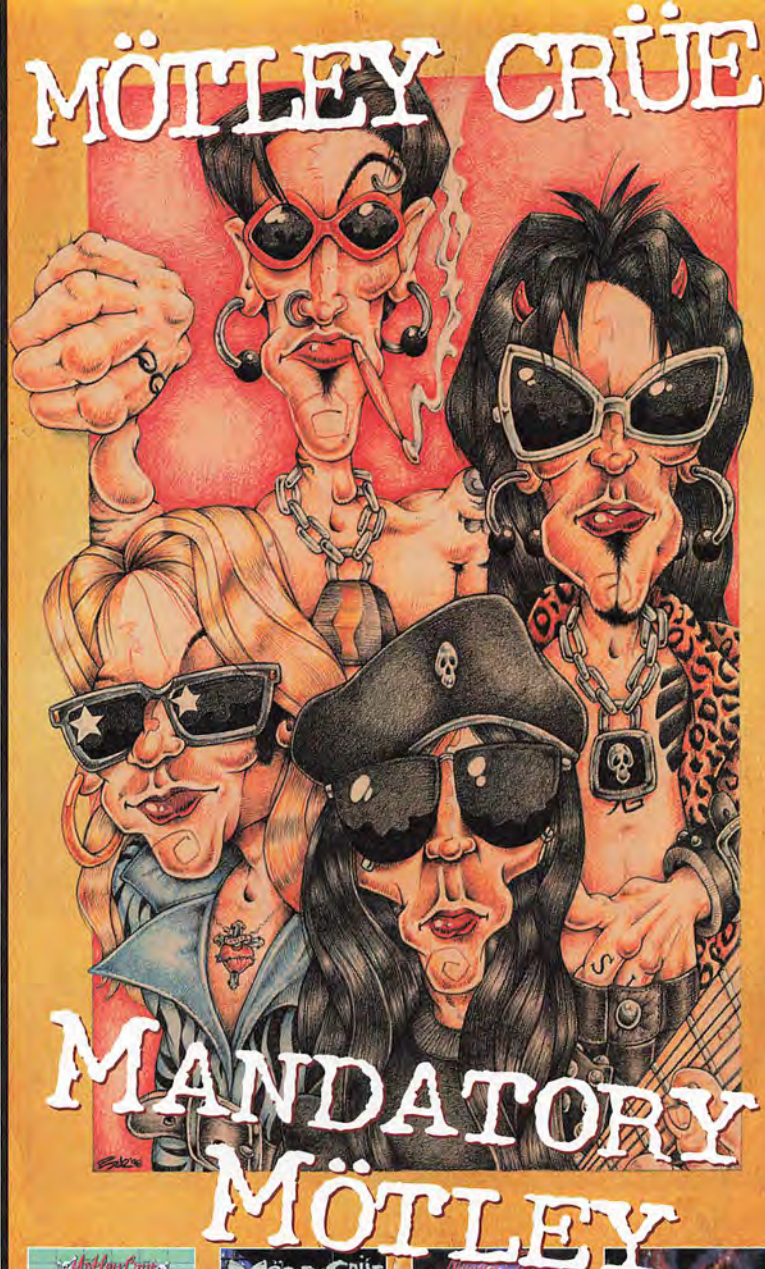
EVERYTHING PLAYING ★★

BUDDHA/BMG HERITAGE

Unlikely New York superstars who journeyed from casual brilliance to a sour dead end

The feel-groovy mid-'60s singles "Daydream" and "Do You Believe in Magic" made New York's Lovin' Spoonful one of pop's hottest groups. If they worried about staying on top, though, it didn't show. The delightful *Hums*, their third outing, may be the loosest album ever from a major band. The fiercely urban "Summer in the City" gave the group its sole chart-topper, but otherwise, John Sebastian's crew got simpler and sillier while trafficking in country blues and rockabilly. "Henry Thomas" is pure jug-band hokum, spiked by ocarina and slide whistle, while "Nashville Cats" affectionately celebrates Johnny Cash's boom-chicka-boom rhythm. But their fortunes plummeted in 1967. Guitarist Zal Yanovsky, the quartet's comic soul, departed, and inspired by *Sgt. Pepper's*, the Spoonful succumbed to the notion of rock as Art. The ensuing, painful *Everything Playing* is a joyless stew of listless tunes and self-conscious arrangements. The standout track, "Younger Generation," delivers a bittersweet ode to lost innocence — a fitting epitaph for this briefly great band.

JON YOUNG →





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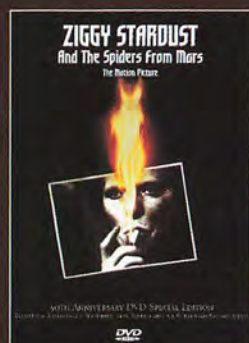


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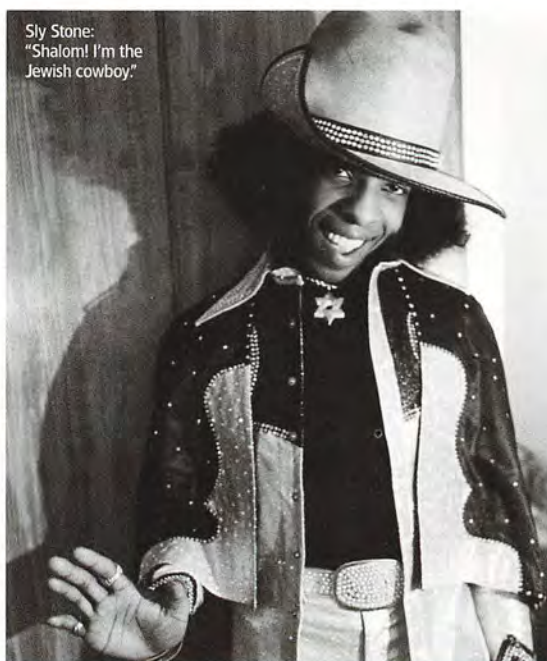
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THE GUIDE REISSUES

Sly Stone:
"Shalom! I'm the
Jewish cowboy."



SLYLY STONED

How drugs ruined the greatest black-rock coalition of the '60s

SLY & THE FAMILY STONE

ESSENTIAL ★★★★★

EPIC/LEGACY

➤ WHEN THEY EMERGED from idyllic San Francisco in 1967, Sly & the Family Stone were truly, as the title of their debut proclaimed, *A Whole New Thing*. Mixed in race as well as gender, revolutionary in their fusion of rock and soul and inspirational for their message-oriented material, they embodied their generation's utopian vision of social harmony as no band before them had.

The group's mastermind was the brilliant, enigmatic Sly Stone (a.k.a. Sylvester Stewart), an influence on chocolate geniuses from Stevie Wonder to Prince to D'Angelo. As disc one of the perfunctorily compiled *Essential* shows, Stone's ability to harness freewheeling compositional elements — shifting vocal parts, drum breaks and prototypical funk riffing — into wonderful three-minute pop songs was peerless.

Despite its proliferation today as oldies airwave fodder and

commercial jingles, no amount of saturation can tarnish music as jubilant as the mobilizing "Dance to the Music," the inclusive "Everyday People" or the uplifting "Stand!"

"Look at Mr. Stewart; he's the only one he has to fear," Stone sang on 1968's "Life." Disc two brings the dark side of his output, commencing with 1971's sardonic number 1 smash "Family Affair," from the chilling hippie-hangover masterpiece *There's a Riot Goin' On*.

Stone's pen still proved playful on "If You Want Me to Stay," a study in surreptitious self-examination. But by the mid-'70s, rampant cocaine use disabled his career, causing frequent canceled concerts and splintering the band's lineup. While *Essential* salvages some of the group's stronger moments from this period ("Time For Livin'," "Loose Booty"), it forsakes others, including the exuberant "Crossword Puzzle" (later sampled by De La Soul) and 1979's hopeful "Remember Who You Are."

Most noticeably absent is the band's cover of "Que Sera, Sera," originally done by Doris Day, a rumored romantic interest of Stone's. It's a flimsy '50s pop standard that he turned into a tortured blues about his inability to halt his self-destruction. The omission is symptomatic of a collection that's long on hits but short on deeper insight for devotees. **CHAIRMAN MAO**

Rampant cocaine
use disabled Sly's
brilliant career.



BOB MARLEY

AFRICAN HERBSMAN

★★★★★

SANCTUARY

GREATEST HITS AT STUDIO ONE

HEARTBEAT/ROUNDER

One essential and one useless comp from reggae's greatest musician

These two reissues represent both ends of the Marley Industry spectrum. *Greatest Hits at Studio One* collects ska cuts he and the Wailers made in 1964, when they couldn't choose between cabaret and protest songs — their hesitancy translates into unsure harmonizing and a lack of conviction. *African Herbsman* is the classic Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer lineup of the late '60s, produced by studio maestro Lee "Scratch" Perry. Under his tutelage, the songwriting turns meaningfully militant and the backing tracks are classic prototype roots reggae, with a warmth Perry expands on the bonus dub tracks. The best versions of many later Marley hits — "Kaya," "Trenchtown Rock," "Duppy Conqueror," "400 Years" — are on this album, which most Marley watchers believe captures him and his historic group at their absolute peak.

LLOYD BRADLEY

PARLIAMENT

UP FOR THE DOWN STROKE

★★★★★

CHOCOLATE CITY

MOTHERSHIP CONNECTION

★★★★★

UNIVERSAL

In the mid-'70s, the funk mother-ship dropped three classics to Earth

Before he succumbed to the most mortal woes — tax problems and

mismanagement — Parliament-Funkadelic bandleader George Clinton was an otherworldly visionary scouring funk's outermost reaches for communal grooves. The first step was 1974's raw, playfully suggestive *Up for the Down Stroke*; in a symbolic act, Clinton covered some old Funkadelic tunes ("Testify," "The Goose") with a looser, freer hand. A paean to his D.C. faithful, 1975's sprawling *Chocolate*

City took a quantum leap with its even thicker grooves and fuller, gospel-inflected choruses.

Mothership Connection, released later that year, was Clinton's "man on the moon" moment, as his crew of James Brown

alums honed their approach, with an enduring hit ("Give Up the Funk") and a relentless slap of spaced-out funk hedonism. It's

one giant booty shake for mankind.

HUA HSU

QUEENSRYËCHE

QUEENSRYËCHE

OPERATION: MINDCRIME

EMPIRE

PROMISED LAND

EMI/CAPITOL

Metal-ish Seattle quintet turned Pink Floyd fetish into showy prog-thrash

A band always striving to live up to its unlaut, Queensryëche minted its sound of sorcery in 1983 with a self-titled EP — now augmented with a full concert recording — on which each instrument battles for shrill supremacy with Geoff Tate's frigid multi-octave vocals. The sensation of fear runs through all Queensryëche's albums, and the band's paranoid bombast came to a boil in the anti-totalitarian sentimentality of 1988's *Operation: Mindcrime*. But when they refined their introspective textures for 1990's *Empire*, "Silent Lucidity" closed the book on the golden →

BURIED TREASURE

UNEARTHING LOST CLASSICS >>

THE LA'S

THE LA'S

GO! DISCS, 1990



The La's didn't lack balls.

These 12 brisk sketches of agitation and pop-rock longing could've made a scrappy half-hour set at the Cavern Club circa 1962. But Liverpool's most promising Fab Four since, er, Echo and the Bunnymen hated this debut (and one another) and never released another LP. More poetic injustice touched their timeless melodies in 2000, when Sixpence None the Richer defiled the exquisite "There She Goes" with screeching Indian-restaurant vocals.

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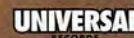


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It illustrates the reinvention of funk during this time period... that style is still revered very much now and used for the basis of a lot of grooves in rap music, and every kind of music, really.

—Mick Jagger

on James Brown, "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag"
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THE GUIDE REISSUES

age of the power ballad. *Empire's* bloated follow-up, 1994's *Promised Land*, was crushed by the weight of Queensrÿche's paranoia.

MARC WEISBLATT

SPIRITUALIZED

THE COMPLETE WORKS,
VOLUME 1 ★★★★★

ARISTA

A double hit of far-flung psychedelia from Brit head-trippers

Before they could afford to splash cash on orchestras and gospel choirs, Jason Pierce's Spiritualized were the Grateful Dead of the early-'90s U.K. indie scene, playing epic sets to the chemically enhanced. Corraling B-sides, fan-club rarities and the like from 1990 to 1993, this two-CD set may seem destined only for the unhealthily obsessed (four versions of "Feel So Sad"?), but its trance-rock mantras ebb and flow into a surprisingly coherent whole. Pierce sets the controls for effects-pedal nirvana, stripping down songs and then rebuilding them with giddy intensity until your head has risen several feet above your shoulders. The title of one track says it all: "Good Dope/Good Fun."

DORIAN LYNKEY

UNCLE TUPELO

NO DEPRESSION ★★★★★

STILL FEEL GONE ★★★★★

MARCH 16-20, 1992 ★★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Three reissues from the Illinois band that lit the alt-country fuse — and then blew up. *Boom!*

Even if you've never heard Uncle Tupelo, you've heard their sound. Pretty much every alt-twangy band of the current purity-in-music movement owes something to these records, first released between 1988 and 1992 and now fortified with previously unreleased bonus tracks. At the time, the trio, from Belleville, Illinois, didn't think it was inciting a movement; it just wanted to soup up traditional country music with the headlong rush of garage-rock and punk. *No Depression* showcases a scrappy young band with talent to burn, while *Still Feel Gone* clarifies the depth of Jeff Tweedy and Jay Farrar's songwriting skills. But the record that has aged the best is the all-acoustic *March 16-20, 1992*, on which originals mesh seamlessly with obscure covers to create a dark, transcendent document of vivid Americana.

JOHN RATLIFF

Blender Approved

The best reissues of the last three months



GEORGE THOROGOOD

WHO DO YOU LOVE?

ROUNDER/HERITAGE

This set offers the late-'70s prime of a roadhouse guitarist who roared the blues like a frat boy at a kegger.



SONIC YOUTH

DIRTY

GEFFEN

New York's no-wave antiheroes took a break from whacking detuned strings on this foray into '90s grunge-pop.



THE CLASH

THE ESSENTIAL CLASH

EPIC/LEGACY

Ranting against war, capitalism and the music business, the Clash were punk's sneering idealists.



AL GREEN

I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU

THE RIGHT STUFF/HI

Green's fifth album, released in 1972, is ridiculously sublime — the very essence of bubble-bath soul.



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REISSUES IN BRIEF >>>>>> BY ROB KEMP



The Isley Brothers: "These are hot outfits, but now we have no drapes."

THE BEACH BOYS

GOOD TIMIN': LIVE AT KNEB WORTH ENGLAND, 1980 ★

EAGLE

Only the terminally churlish would deny the summer-sunny pleasure and emotional complexity of these 22 California-rock benchmarks. But only the terminally fannish will want to sit through this sloppily performed, shoddily packaged tour memento from a disturbed, hirsute Brian Wilson and his opportunist colleagues.

EURYTHMICS

IN THE GARDEN ★★

RCA/BMG HERITAGE

In 1981, Annie Lennox was just another chilly New Wave chanteuse and not the orange-crew-cutted wraith who spooked MTV viewers with gender-crossing antics. This, the first Eurythmics album, is merely a pleasant, undistinguished offshoot of England's New Romantic movement — the magnetic hookiness of the all-synthesizer "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" was still a full two years away.

THE ISLEY BROTHERS

3 + 3 ★★

EPIC

On which Ohio's venerable R&B sibling trio adds two younger brothers and one cousin and infuses its luxurious soul and funk with Hendrix-style guitar salvos.

Includes 1973's Top 10 hit "That Lady" and also

pimped-out renditions of the Doobie Brothers'



Sadly, Eurythmics' "Heimlich Dance" never really caught on.

"Listen to the Music" and Seals and Croft's un-pimpin' "Summer Breeze."

DON MCLEAN

THE LEGENDARY SONGS OF DON MCLEAN ★★

CAPITOL

Actually, New York folkie McLean had exactly one legendary song — "American Pie," 1972's endless extended metaphor for lost innocence. Otherwise, this collection offers dreary remakes of hits by Buddy Holly and Roy Orbison — plus "Vincent (Starry, Starry Night)," a goopy ode that romanticizes the art world's premier ear-severer.

TURBONEGRO

ASS COBRA ★★

APOCALYPSE DUDES ★★

BURNING HEART/EPITAPH

With song titles like "The Midnight NAMBLA" and "Rendezvous with Anus," it's clear that Sweden has never belched up a more scatological- and perversion-obsessed hard-rock band. It's a shame, then, that this quintet's metal-tinged hardcore, championed by Dave Grohl and the Hives, lacks demented inspiration. Strictly average.

TOM VERLAINE

TOM VERLAINE ★★

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

As the leader of Television, Verlaine brought strangled singing and careening guitar-solo expeditions to New York's original punk wave. His first not-quite-as-thrilling-as-Television solo album, from 1979, features the elegiac "Kingdom Come" (covered by David Bowie a year later) and the uncharacteristically goofy "Yonki Time."

YANNI

THE ULTIMATE YANNI ★★

WINDHAM HILL/BMG HERITAGE

That flowing hair. That penetrating gaze. This gauche Greek rivals Fabio as the dream lover of many a Midwestern matron. Most others burst out laughing at the mention of his name, particularly when confronted with his pan flute and synth-heavy New Age twaddle, collected here for sale on TV. There are easier ways to fall asleep.

ZIGGY MARLEY DRAGONFLY



ZIGGY MARLEY'S SOLO DEBUT ALBUM

FEATURING THE HIT "TRUE TO MYSELF"



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artist's choice™



I just think it's one of the most powerful blues I've ever heard. You have to stare at the wall and look Muddy in the face. It's heartfelt, beautiful singing. It just does not let you go.

—Keith Richards

on Muddy Waters, "Still A Fool"

Track 4 from Hear Music's *Rolling Stones Artist's Choice* CD



It's like a mixed tape from the Rolling Stones

HEAR MUSIC presents *Rolling Stones Artist's Choice*:

16 songs chosen by Mick, Keith, Charlie and Ronnie as the music that matters to them. From James Brown and Aretha Franklin to Otis Redding and Sade, this CD is a testament to the music that influenced one of the most influential bands of all time. Learn more about Artist's Choice at hearmusic.com.

AND FOR THE BEST OF THE STONES, PICK UP FORTY LICKS OR VISIT WWW.ROLLINGSTONES.COM

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"I Would Listen to John Denver and Just Cry!"

Never mind the blowtorch standup routines and the oral-sex gags. **Sarah Silverman** has always been a sucker for pathetic ballads. And — oh, yes — all her friends think she looks like a monkey . . .

BY JON REGARDIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS



No, no, Sarah — you need to plug them in.

THIS PAGE: STRIPED TANK BY AGNES B.; PANTS BY SONIA RYKIEL FROM WHITE TRASH CHARMS, L.A.; SHOES BY MICHELLE MASON; WATCH BY DEAN, L.A. OPPOSITE PAGE: BLUE JERSEY SILVERMAN'S OWN; PETTICOAT BY AGNES B.; SHOES STYLIST'S OWN

» "I USE MUSIC to escape from my life," says flamethrowing comedian Sarah Silverman, 32. The raven-haired crush of a million indie-rock boys sits cheerfully on a bright Hollywood soundstage as a makeup woman carefully applies lip gloss before the *Blender* photo shoot. "There are love songs where I insert my own characters and my own love scenarios — you know, my boyfriend [Jimmy Kimmel] and me."

Silverman will have a different boyfriend this autumn — at least on film — when she appears in *The School of Rock*, a Richard Linklater-directed comedy about a substitute teacher (Jack Black) who forms a band with his elementary-school pupils. Silverman plays Patti DiMarco, the bossy girlfriend of Black's roommate. Though she had some musical moments in her hit 2002 one-woman show *Jesus Is Magic*, she doesn't sing in the movie: "My part is, I play an asshole."

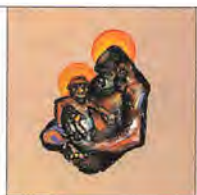
Silverman started doing standup comedy in her teens, working the Boston and New York scenes. She notched a year on *Saturday Night*

Live and then moved to Los Angeles, where she scored supporting roles in *The Bachelor* and *There's Something About Mary* and had recurring parts on *Seinfeld* and *Greg the Bunny*.

Still, it's onstage where Silverman most frequently slays 'em, thanks to her trademark helium-voiced delivery — chockablock with racial and sexual boundary-smashers. For example: "A couple of nights ago, I was licking jelly off my boyfriend's penis, and I thought, 'Oh, my God — I'm turning into my mother!'"

The woman who makes her living with words is an avowed fan of song lyrics, and she talks with awed sincerity about her favorite artists. The normally acerbic comic is even a sucker for a tender ballad, and has been for decades.

"When I was really little, I would play [John Denver's] 'Sunshine on My Shoulders'; Silverman says, smiling. "I was just 11 years old, and I would listen to it with the sun coming through my window and just cry. That is the first time I can remember being moved."



THE SOLIPSISTICS

JESUS OF THE APES
FRIGIDISC, 2000

"Jesus is recurring in my life. [I did] *Jesus Is Magic*, and I feel very connected to apes — because of my hairiness, and because I have a very monkey-like face. So many of my friends have called me 'Monkey' as a nickname. So *Jesus of the Apes* very much feels as though it was written for me."

"I feel very connected to apes, because I have a monkey-like face."



BEN FOLDS

ROCKIN' THE SUBURBS
EPIC, 2001

"The lyrics are so beautiful. They're all intricate stories. He does a song called 'Zak and Sara,' which has nothing to do with me, and nothing I can relate to. In the song, he even says it's Sara without an *h*, and I am with an *h*. But I still imagine it's about me. [Comedian] Zach Galifianakis and I pretend it's about us."



JONI MITCHELL

BLUE
EPIRE, 1971

"I first heard *Blue* on wax when a friend played it for me. I had just moved to California when I heard the song 'California.' Being from New York, you're not supposed to like Los Angeles. This was the first time I was able to look at L.A. and actually see heart in it."



NANCI GRIFFITH

FLYER
ELEKTRA, 1994

"Usually I don't like the little-girl voice. I don't like it in anyone — especially myself. Griffith has this little-girl voice, but it's so pure and real and true. This is a great car CD. I pretend I'm her in the car. With bills and phone and gas and collection agencies. But that's a different story."



ELVIS COSTELLO

THE VERY BEST OF ELVIS COSTELLO
RHINO, 2001

"I could take up the whole Top 10 with Elvis Costello. His lyrics are so complex. When I'm in a good mood or trying to get myself psyched for standup, I like to listen to him. 'Pump It Up' — it gets me *puuuumped* up. It exercises my brain; it gets my mind going."



We said, You have to plug them in! Oh, for God's sake. . . We said, You have to plug them in!

AND THE REST ...

THE 6THS HYACINTHS AND THISTLES THE 6THS WASPIS
NESTS FIONA APPLE TIDAL
FIONA APPLE WHEN THE PAWN
JOAN ARMATRADE HOW
CRUEL JOAN ARMATRADE
TRACK RECORD A TRIBE
CALLED QUEST THE LOW END
THEORY BLUES TRAVELER SAVE
HIS SOUL BLUES TRAVELER
STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING
DAVID BOWIE THE MAN WHO
SOLD THE WORLD BREEDERS
LAST SPLASH BREEDERS POO
BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB
BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB
BUFFALO TOM BIG RED LETTER
DAY BUFFALO TOM LET ME
COME OVER ALEX CHILTON
BLACK LIST ALEX CHILTON TOP
30 THE CLASH LONDON
CALLING SHAWN COLVIN A
FEW SMALL REPAIRS SHAWN
COLVIN FAT CITY SHAWN
COLVIN STEADY ON ELVIS
COSTELLO ALL THIS USELESS
BEAUTY ELVIS COSTELLO
ARMED FORCES ELVIS
COSTELLO IMPERIAL BEDROOM
ELVIS COSTELLO KING OF
AMERICA ELVIS COSTELLO MY
AIM IS TRUE ELVIS COSTELLO
TRUST ELVIS COSTELLO WHEN I
WAS CRUEL MILES DAVIS KIND
OF BLUE MILES DAVIS SOUND
ABOUT MIDNIGHT DE LA SOUL
3 FEET HIGH AND RISING DE LA
SOUL BULHLOONE MINDSTATE
FRENTE! MARVIN THE ALBUM
FRENTE! SHAPE Nanci
GRIFFITH THE LAST OF THE
TRUE BELIEVERS Nanci
GRIFFITH STORM'S GEORGE
HARRISON ALL THINGS MUST
PASS GIL-SCOTT HERON IT'S
YOUR WORLD GIL-SCOTT
HERON THE REVOLUTION WILL
NOT BE TELEVISED LAURYN
HILL THE MISEDUCATION OF
LAURYN HILL LAURYN HILL
MTV UNPLUGGED NO 2 O JANIS
IAN BETWEEN THE LINES
IMPERIAL TEEN SEASICK
IMPERIAL TEEN WHAT IS NOT
TO LOVE JOE JACKSON LIVE
1980-86 JOE JACKSON LOOK
SHARPI BILLY JOEL COLD
SPRING HARBOR BILLY JOEL
TURNSTILES NORAH JONES
COME AWAY WITH ME NORAH
JONES FIRST SESSIONS
CAROLE KING NATURAL
WOMAN THE VERY BEST OF
CAROLE KING CAROLE KING
TAPESTRY THE KINKS GIVE THE
PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT THE
KINKS THE VILLAGE GREEN
PRESERVATION SOCIETY BEN
LEE GRANDPAW WOULD BEN
LEE SOMETHING TO REMEMBER
ME BY JOHN LENNON JOHN
LENNON PLASTIC ONO BAND
AIMEE MANN LOST IN SPACE
AIMEE MANN WHATEVER PAUL
MCCARTNEY FLOWERS IN THE
DIRT PAUL MCCARTNEY PIPES
OF PEACE PAUL MCCARTNEY
TUG OF WAR MALCOLM
MCLAREN DUCK ROCK
MALCOLM MCLAREN FANS
THELONIOUS MONK BRILLIANT
CORNERS THELONIOUS MONK
STRAIGHT NO CHASER SINEAD
O'CONNOR I DO NOT WANT
WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT SINEAD
O'CONNOR THE LION AND THE
COBRA THE PIXIES
BOSSANOVA THE PIXIES
DOOLITTLE THE PRIMITIVES
THE BEST OF THE PRIMITIVES
THE PRIMITIVES LOVELY
RADIOHEAD THE BENDS
RADIOHEAD KID A RADIOHEAD
OK COMPUTER RADIOHEAD
PABLO HONEY LOU REED
TRANSFORMER COMPANY
SEGUNDO CALLE SALUD RON
SEXSMITH BLUE BOY RON
SEXSMITH OTHER SONGS
DUNCAN SHEIK DUNCAN
SHEIK PATTI SMITH DREAM OF
LIFE PATTI SMITH EASTER PATTI
SMITH HORSES SUNDAYS
BLIND SUNDAYS READING
WRITING AND ARITHMETIC
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS FLOOD
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
LINCOLN VARIOUS ARTISTS
ARPELIE SOUNDTRACK
VARIOUS ARTISTS CROOKLYN
SOUNDTRACK VARIOUS ARTISTS
ARTISTS GEORGIA SOUND-
TRACK VARIOUS ARTISTS
GRACE OF MY HEART SOUND-
TRACK VARIOUS ARTISTS HIGH
FIDELITY SOUNDTRACK
VARIOUS ARTISTS LITTLE SHOP
OF HORRORS SOUNDTRACK
VARIOUS ARTISTS THE MAN OF
LA MANCHA SOUNDTRACK
VARIOUS ARTISTS O BROTHER,
WHERE ART THOU SOUND-
TRACK VARIOUS ARTISTS THE
ROYAL TENENBAUMS SOUND-
TRACK VARIOUS ARTISTS
RUSHMORE SOUNDTRACK
WEEN THE MOLLUSK WEEN
PURE GUAVA LUCINDA
WILLIAMS CAR WHEELS ON A
GRAVEL ROAD STEVIE WONDER
HOTTER THAN JULY STEVIE
WONDER INNERVISIONS YO LA
TENGO I CAN HEAR THE HEART
BEATING AS ONE



BILLY BRAGG WORKERS PLAYTIME GO! DISCS/ELEKTRA, 1988

"I played this CD in the theater before *Jesus Is Magic*. Billy Bragg is a great songwriter and he can write hooky things, but he isn't hip. I don't want people going into my show thinking this is something that's hip. I want them to hear it and make it whatever it is for them."



THE PRETENDERS THE SINGLES SIRE, 1987

"This is some of the best shower music. I bring in my CD player, put it on the toilet and blast it as loud as it goes, and I give a little shower concert. I sing into the corner, where it really bounces off the wall. I pretend it's like a mic, but it's just where the wall is. I have a really tiny shower with good acoustics."



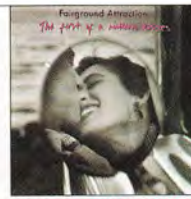
JULIANA HATFIELD BECOME WHAT YOU ARE MAMMOTH, 1993

"I was driving in L.A., listening to public radio, and they played 'My Sister.' I was like, 'Who is that? I love this girl!' This is good road-trip music, and every day is a road trip in L.A. I don't understand why she isn't a huge star, but you always kind of secretly prefer that, because you feel you own it a little more."



MAGNETIC FIELDS 69 LOVE SONGS MERGE, 1999

"I was on the red-eye from New York to L.A., on my way to do the Hugh Hefner roast for Comedy Central. Everyone was sleeping. The guy across the aisle had headphones on. We made eye contact and I said, 'What are you listening to?' He said, 'This is the greatest triple CD.' He gave me his headphones. I loved it right away."



FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION THE FIRST OF A MILLION KISSES RCA, 1988

"I used to be a real female chauvinist. I was unfeeling in terms of relationships. It didn't occur to me that I could hurt a man's feelings. Every time I'd go out with a guy I'd play him 'The Wind Knows My Name.' It's saying, 'Don't get too attached.' But I'm not that way anymore. I'm respectful of my lovers."

GRATEFUL DEAD

Bluegrass brats, electric bluesmen and acid-tested purveyors of freely improvised "space" music, the Grateful Dead were the left-handed monkey wrench of American rock from their '60s San Francisco glory days until lead guitarist and non-leading bandleader Jerry Garcia's death in 1995. The Dead recorded only 13 studio albums and enjoyed just one Top 10 hit, so their true legacy resides in the 2,314 live shows they played, each of which was different from the other 2,313. Dozens of them have been released commercially. "Coming to hear the Grateful Dead is like getting a kit from Radio Shack," Garcia once said. "And it might not work." By Richard Gehr

BLENDER APPROVED

ANTHEM OF THE SUN WARNER BROS., 1968

★★★★★

THE GRATEFUL DEAD
ANTHEM OF THE SUN



THE
TRIPPY
MASTER-
PIECE

Famously mixed "for the hallucinations," as Jerry Garcia said, the Grateful Dead's second studio album is as fierce and uncompromising a psychedelic album as has ever been recorded. And thanks to the considerable white-blues cred possessed by Ron

"Pigpen" McKernan (avant-garde keyboardist Tom Constanten and second drummer Mickey Hart had recently joined the original quintet as well), *Anthem of the Sun* swings hard, too. The band overlaid multiple live versions of itself on the thunderous "That's It for the Other One," the "scary song of fun" (as rhythm guitarist Bob Weir called it) that stayed in their live sets as a link to the Dead's baptism at Ken Kesey's acid tests. **Standout tracks:** "That's It for the Other One," "New Potato Caboose," "Alligator"

LIVE/DEAD WARNER BROS., 1969

★★★★★



The Dead recorded their first great live album to help pay off the production debts they incurred with their expensive studio efforts. Consisting of three shows edited into one idyllic experience, *Live/Dead* was released on four vinyl sides, each with a distinct

personality. It kicks off mid-show with the band entering warp drive via "Dark Star." Side two speeds by like an atomic freight train, side three features the crowd-pleasing blues raunch of "Turn On Your Lovelight" and side four bids you goodnight with waves of feedback. **Standout tracks:** "Dark Star," "The Eleven," "Turn On Your Lovelight"

AMERICAN BEAUTY WARNER BROS., 1970

★★★★★



The Dead have always been considered jammers more than songwriters. But the second great country-rock album the Dead recorded in 1970 is a stone masterpiece of cosmic American songwriting, mostly acoustic arrangements and some of the sweetest harmonies this side of vocal coaches Crosby, Stills & Nash. Lyricist Robert Hunter, though, is the MVP on an elegant album lacking a single Garcia solo but brimming with Zen-like aphorisms and lilting fatalism. **Standout tracks:** "Box of Rain," "Ripple," "Attics of My Life"

EUROPE '72 WARNER BROS., 1972

★★★★



Founding member "Pigpen" McKernan's final recording (his liver gave out the following year at age 28) also marked the debut of pianist Keith Godchaux and his singing wife, Donna. Hunter hoped such rough-hewn gems as "He's Gone," "Jack Straw" and

"Tennessee Jed," introduced here on the group's third (and some argue, best) live album, would form the crux of a never-recorded country-rock studio effort called *Rambling Rose*. At the top of their game musically, the Dead returned home to new popularity.

Standout tracks: "He's Gone," "China Cat Sunflower," "Morning Dew"

SO MANY ROADS (1965–1995)

GRATEFUL DEAD/ARISTA, 1999

★★★★★



Cherry-picked by four of the band's most knowledgeable fans, this swankily packaged five-disc set offers a connoisseur's history of the Dead through unreleased live tracks, studio rarities, outtakes and revealing rehearsal tapes. Discover how a band called the

Warlocks recorded the caffeinated garage-psych original "Can't Come Down" in 1965, then evolved into the ponderously powerful arena juggernauts who shambled elegantly through Garcia and Hunter's sad and lonely "So Many Roads" 30 years later.

Standout tracks: "I Know You Rider," "Watkins Glen Soundcheck Jam," "Whiskey in the Jar"



The Grateful Dead in 1979, from left: Bill Kreutzmann, Jerry Garcia, Phil Lesh, Bob Weir, Brent Mydland, Mickey Hart

The Dead created a virtual soundtrack of tripping with filtered voices and tempo shifts.



GREAT

AOXOMOXOA WARNER BROS., 1969 ★★★★



This still-beguiling transitional album bridges the seamless psychedelia of *Anthem of the Sun* and the

more rustic releases to come. It also introduces lyricist Robert Hunter, who cowrote all eight songs. The Dead employed one of the first 16-track tape machines to create a virtual soundtrack of tripping in the late '60s, full of filtered voices, tempo shifts and local color, while remaining a blues band at heart. **Standout tracks:** "Doin' That Rag," "China Cat Sunflower," "Cosmic Charlie"

WORKINGMAN'S DEAD WARNER BROS., 1970 ★★★★



No, the Dead weren't exclusively about half-hour jams and nitrous-inspired studio effects. They mined Hank

Williams, Robert Johnson and Buck Owens on this hard-chooglin' album featuring working-class blues imbued with the Dead's trademark hippie horse sense. Garcia broke out his pedal-steel guitar and banjo for the sessions and invited Deadheads to join "Uncle John's Band," which links the group and its fans to both the Revolutionary War and the Tin Pan Alley tradition of "Alexander's Ragtime Band." **Standout tracks:** "Uncle John's Band," "Cumberland Blues," "New Speedway Boogie"



Jerry Garcia, rock & roll's best 9 1/2-fingered guitarist!

GRATEFUL DEAD WARNER BROS., 1971 ★★★★



Also known as *Skullfuck*, a proposed title Warner Bros. rejected, the Dead's second double live album (and

first gold record) reflects the economy of the previous year's roots revivalism. Mickey Hart's temporary departure after his father was caught embezzling band funds left the Dead stripped down to the original quintet (drummer Bill Kreutzmann, always the more swinging of the two, stepped memorably to the fore). The group mixed Chuck Berry and Merle Haggard with cosmic excursions. **Standout tracks:** "Bertha," "The Other One," "Wharf Rat"

BLUES FOR ALLAH GRATEFUL DEAD, 1975 ★★★★



The Dead stayed off the road for most of 1974. They recorded solo projects as well as this intimate item

some consider their finest studio effort. Recorded leisurely in rhythm guitarist Bob Weir's home studio, the album concludes with the title suite, a 12-minute collage of desert sounds and antiwar lyrics with a Middle Eastern tinge that probably wouldn't play so well today. **Standout tracks:** "Help on the Way/Slipknot!," "Franklin's Tower"

THE GOLDEN ROAD (1965-1973) RHINO, 2001 ★★★★



This elaborate, coffin-like box set includes all nine of the Dead's Warner Bros. releases as well as the two-disc *Birth of the Dead*, which chronicles their earlier incarnation as the Warlocks in the studio and onstage. Nearly all the studio albums are beefed up with unreleased live tracks, along with commercials and other treats. **Standout tracks:** "Mindbender (Confusion's Prince)," "In the Pines"

CHECK IT OUT

GRATEFUL DEAD WARNER BROS., 1967 ★★★



Chalk up the hyperactive vibe of the Dead's debut, released just in time for San Francisco's infamous

Summer of Love, to the amphetamine band was consuming during its creation. It's a solid effort nevertheless, combining blues, folk and R&B standards with garage-rocking originals. **Standout tracks:** "The Golden Road (To Unlimited Devotion)," "Viola Lee Blues"

WAKE OF THE FLOOD GRATEFUL DEAD, 1973 ★★★



They did it themselves before DIY was cool: The Dead's first release on their own label was an ill-

fated foray. The music sounds soggy earnest, with many of the songs focusing on birth, death and the eternal change of seasons. **Standout tracks:** "Mississippi Half-Step Uptown Toodleo," "Stella Blue," "Eyes of the World"

BOB WEIR ACE WARNER BROS., 1972 ★★★



Weir, the band's youngest member, recorded his first solo album with all of the Dead except Pigpen, using lyrics by longtime friend John Perry Barlow. Still striving to prove himself, Weir, who had been fired briefly along with Pigpen in 1968, enriched the band's live repertoire, even if the album itself was essentially just a really good demo. **Standout tracks:** "Playing in the Band," "Cassidy"

WEIR GOES SOLO!

WITHOUT A NET ARISTA, 1990 ★★★



Brent Mydland, the keyboardist hired in 1979 to replace Keith and Donna Godchaux, OD'd on a heroin-cocaine

speedball in 1990. This live album from 1989-90 documents the Dead at their avant-arena-rocking peak (saxophonist Branford Marsalis blows free on "Eyes of the World") and acknowledges Mydland's relatively mainstream contributions to the mix. **Standout tracks:** "Eyes of the World," "Dear Mr. Fantasy"

GRATEFUL DEAD FROM THE MARS HOTEL GRATEFUL DEAD, 1974 ★★★



Onstage, the band was surfing the loud, clear waves pumping through their humongous new 614-

speaker "Wall of Sound." Their ongoing ambivalence about studio work, however, was reflected in this lackluster effort, which is redeemed a bit by bassist Phil Lesh's ambitious "Unbroken Chain" and the tropical lilt of "Scarlet Begonias." **Standout tracks:** "Unbroken Chain," "Ship of Fools," "Scarlet Begonias"

INFRARED ROSES GRATEFUL DEAD/ARISTA, 1991 ★★★



Just when the Dead seemed to have lost their avant-garde edge, they released this album focusing

entirely on the traditional second-set drum and "space" interludes edited, mixed and morphed by band MIDI guru Bob Bralove. Listeners will either see God or feel an uncontrollable urge to take a leak. **Standout tracks:** "Speaking in Swords," "Sparrow Hawk Row"

BE CAREFUL

TERRAPIN STATION

ARISTA, 1977
★★★



RUINED
BY A
PRODUCER!

Garcia's last studio recording before discovering heroin was yet another Dead album with great songs reamed by ham-fisted production, this time courtesy of Fleetwood Mac producer Keith Olsen. Side two consisted of the titular seven-part suite, whose opening section remained a live favorite. **Standout tracks:** "Estimated Prophet," "Lady With a Fan"

HISTORY OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD, VOL. 1 (BEAR'S CHOICE)

WARNER BROS., 1973
★★★



Legendary LSD manufacturer and sometime Dead soundman Owsley "Bear" Stanley programmed this ragged live tribute to "Pigpen" McKernan from 1970 tracks that hadn't appeared on other live albums. **Standout track:** "Smokestack Lightning"

FALLOUT FROM THE PHIL ZONE

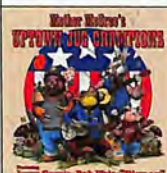
GRATEFUL DEAD/ARISTA, 1997
★★★



Phil Lesh took an idiosyncratic trip into the band's enormous archive, unearthing a delirious half-hour-long lo-fi "In the Midnight Hour" from 1967 and a magnificent Garcia rendition of Bob Dylan's "Visions of Johanna." The rest of the album, however, feels like sloppy seconds, chosen by the band member who has most earnestly attempted to preserve the brand in recent years. **Standout tracks:** "In the Midnight Hour," "Visions of Johanna"

MOTHER MCCREE'S UPTOWN JUG CHAMPIONS

GRATEFUL DEAD, 1999
★★★



It's not for everyone, but it's where it all began nonetheless. Garcia, Weir and Pigpen were members of this charmingly ramshackle jug (i.e., bluegrass) band before forming the Warlocks. This live performance dates from 1964. **Standout tracks:** "Beat It on Down the Line," "The Monkey and the Engineer"

SHAKEDOWN STREET

ARISTA, 1978
★★★



Little Feat leader Lowell George, who was having his own narcotics issues at the time, produced the first downright mediocre Grateful Dead album. But guitarists Weir and Garcia had their moments, and the title track and reggae-rhythmed "Fire on the Mountain" proved to be keepers. **Standout tracks:** "Shakedown Street," "Fire on the Mountain"

IN THE DARK

ARISTA, 1987
★★★



Garcia collapsed into a diabetic coma for several days in July 1986. The album the group recorded mostly live in the studio the following spring contains the survivor anthem "Touch of Grey," the Dead's first and only hit single, which catapulted them to a height of popularity to which many older fans could never adjust. **Standout tracks:** "West L.A. Fadeaway," "Black Muddy River"

FOR FANS ONLY

GO TO HEAVEN

ARISTA, 1980
★



With its bland love songs (courtesy of the group's new keyboardist, Brent Mydland) and tepid post-production edits (courtesy of label honcho Clive Davis), this record marked a hellish low that frightened the Dead away from the recording studio for the next seven years. **Standout tracks:** "Althea," "Feel Like a Stranger"

DYLAN & THE DEAD

COLUMBIA, 1989
★



The latest album by either the Dead or Dylan? Rehearsal tapes displayed a surprising looseness that clotted into a dispirited arena tour. The Dead's debt to Zimmy would be repaid more fairly (without his participation) on 2002's live *Postcards of the Hanging*, a collection of Dylan covers. **Standout track:** "Slow Train"

BUILT TO LAST

ARISTA, 1989
★



The Dead's recording career ended with a whimper. Their ironically titled swan song is most notable for "Foolish Heart" and "Victim or the Crime," a pair of pointed anti-asshole (if not anti-drug) messages to poor, addicted Garcia, whose sorely abused body finally gave out at a California rehab clinic in 1995. **Standout tracks:** "Victim or the Crime," "Standing on the Moon"

FURTHER LISTENING

GRATEFUL DEAD/JOHN OSWALD GRAYFOLDED

GRATEFUL DEAD, 1995
★★★★

"Plunderphonics" artist Oswald sampled, cut, mixed, layered, pasted and twisted together more than 50 versions of "Dark Star" recorded since 1969. The result is both danceable and infinitely rich in detail, as though this trippiest of songs were itself tripping.

FURTHER VIEWING

DOWNHILL FROM HERE

MHV, 1989
★★★★

Garcia appears downright jovial during this 150-minute warts-and-all hybrid of two summer 1989 shows performed in East Troy, Wisconsin.

FURTHER READING

A LONG STRANGE TRIP: THE INSIDE HISTORY OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD

BY DENNIS MCNALLY
BROADWAY BOOKS, 2002
★★★★★

The Dead's longtime publicist delivers the diplomatic skinny on the band's long career while focusing on the early years of unparalleled experimentation and outright weirdness involving guns, drugs and limitless possibilities.



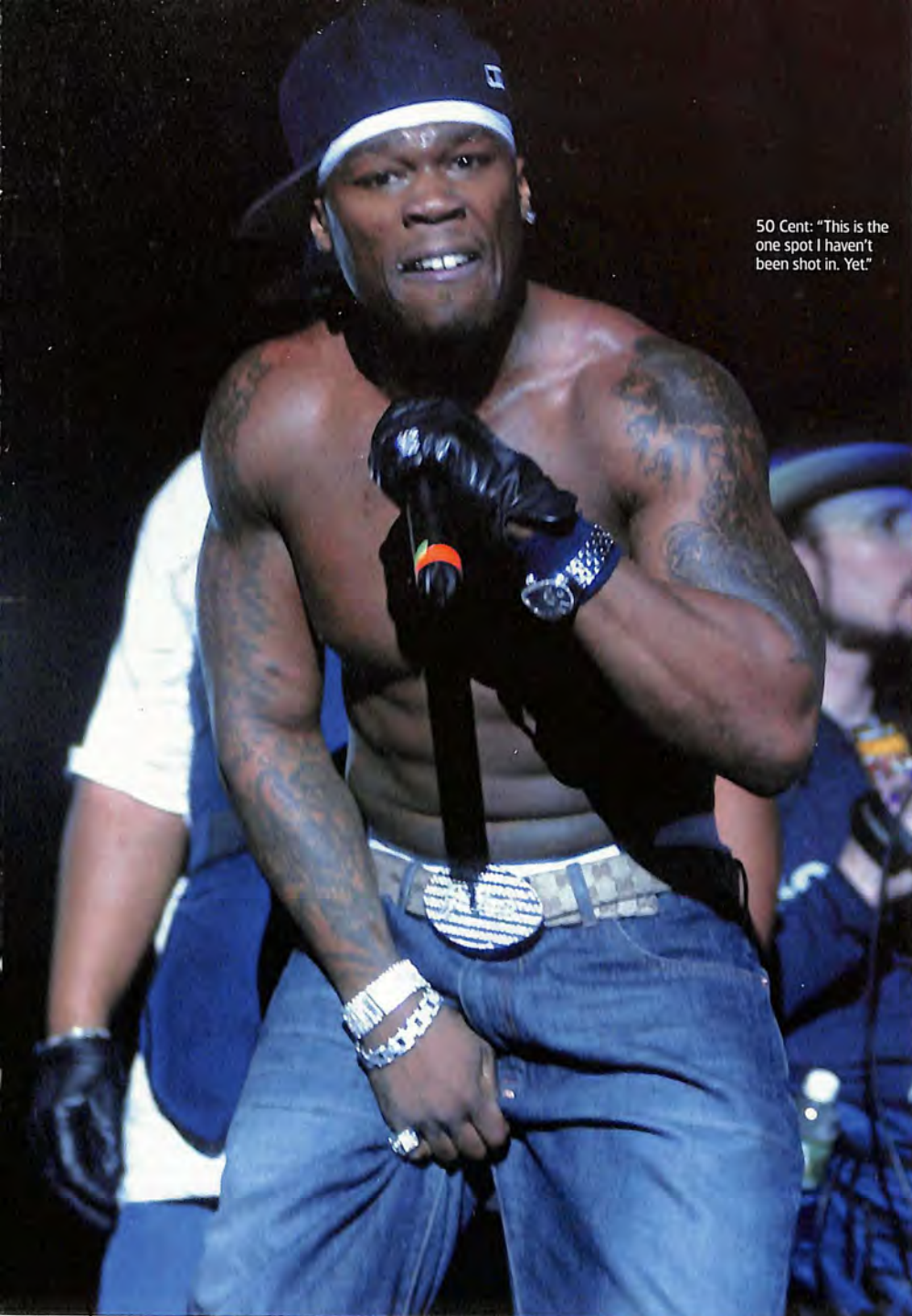
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50 Cent: "This is the one spot I haven't been shot in. Yet."



Foxy Brown spots the guy who stole her clothes.

He's Nuts!

It's a hometown celebration for crazy-ass New York rap hero 50 Cent — who loves his fans so much, he threatens to shoot them. Sweet!

THE BLOCK PARTY

DMX, 50 CENT, FOXY BROWN, JAHEIM, EVE, CLIPSE

NASSAU COLISEUM, UNIONDALE, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 25, 2003 ★★☆☆

» "WHAT MAKES YOU think that I won't run up on you with a 9?" 50 Cent leers at a sold-out crowd that's chanting along to "Wanksta," his breakout single of last summer.

With almost any other rapper, you could dismiss this as an empty threat. But coming from 50 Cent — a crack dealer-turned-rap

megastar who's taken more bullets than a tin can in Kid Rock's backyard — you might think twice before waving it off. Behind him, 40-odd men swarm the stage, fists pumping, each with a bulletproof vest strapped to his chest. At the head of the mob, 50 makes the shape of a gun with his hand, while the Kevlar models mimic the sounds of gunshots: "Blo! Blo! Blo!"

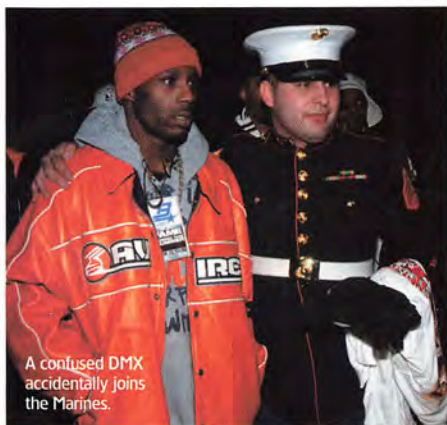
The values cherished at tonight's hip-hop gala — boasting an A-list of urban hitmakers and sponsored by New York radio station Hot 97 — are greed, decadence and, above all, bleak and bloody survivalism: It's like a hip-hop

version of *Joe Millionaire*. Murky morals pervade 50 Cent's *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, which filters Tupac Shakur's fatalism through an irresistible, syrupy chuckle and blew away even his label's expectations by selling more than 2.1 million copies in three weeks (the last rapper to post comparable sales was 50's "favorite white boy" and label head, Eminem). In his first public performance since that stunning chart debut, the stone-faced MC from Queens, New York, born Curtis Jackson, proves that after a dormant stretch, gangsta rap is alive and packing.

At the start of his 40-minute set, a smaller group of men wait to escort 50 like Secret Service agents cocooning the president. He emerges wearing jeans and a white T-shirt that looks especially bulky, even for his bodybuilder's frame. The crowd's roar doubles as he strips off the shirt to reveal his signature fashion statement, a navy blue bulletproof vest. Soon the Kevlar is gone, too, and the only thing between 50 Cent and 17,000 fans is a jewel-riddled pendant the size of Rosie O'Donnell's head.

He launches into "U Not Like Me," a song about the shooting that sent him to the hospital in 2000, which scared Columbia Records execs into tearing up his first contract. Demonstrating his curious habit of flashing a cavalier grin in the face of the violently unfunny (in a recent MTV interview, he smiled faintly while mentioning the murder of his mother), 50 distills the moral of his story into a poppy, singsong hook: "If you get shot and run to the cops, you not like me."

The audience sings along with him on the obscure mix-tape track "G-Unit Anthem" and the crossover hit "In da Club" alike — which is a tricky feat, because the atrocious sound mix buries 50's hypnotic drawl and inspired one-liners in fuzzed-out mush. And that's when he



A confused DMX accidentally joins the Marines.



Eve: "Damn, I've got earrings bigger than Foxy Brown's shorts."



Jaheim: "Wait a second — you're not Foxy Brown!"

chooses to rap at all: It's disappointing that the man Eminem recently heralded as "the illest motherfucker alive" sings along to a pre-recorded vocal track and lets overloud hypemen do his job for bars on end.

With 50 Cent, though, rhyming skills are only a fraction of the package; his renown comes from his death-defying back story and unlikely charisma — the way he observes violence with the amused detachment of a Roman emperor watching lions tear apart some unlucky Christians. Tonight, the mere sight of him sends chants of "50-50-50!" through the arena — the mic, like the bulletproof vest, is merely an accessory.

Street-corner themes turn out to be the order of the evening. In an earlier set, Jaheim struggles through his sensitive-thug slow jams. On record, he sings in a velvety voice reminiscent of '70s soul men, but here he stalks around like a zombie, letting loose painfully flat notes with particularly bland accompaniment from a wah-wah addicted soft-funk band.

Foxy Brown and Philly rapstress Eve fill their short sets with tomboy boasts and sex demands. Foxy spends her performance introducing us to the lower half of her ass; her tiny hot pants could pass for a Barbie doll's belt.

Opening duo Clipse bring out their patron saint, producer Pharrell Williams of the Neptunes, and Dirty South mastermind Baby to

The values cherished at tonight's show: greed, decadence and survivalism.



assist with their bouncy, cocaine-laced narratives. Their version of the stomping hit "Grindin'" storms through the stadium like a breakbeat "We Will Rock You."

Uniondale, New York, is a far cry from the South Bronx, but the audience does its best to make the Block Party live up to its name. At one

point, *Blender* spots six blunts being rolled within a 10-foot radius, and fans clog the steps as though they're apartment stoops.

Security is surprisingly laid-back, but the relaxed atmosphere claims a victim: The show runs hours off schedule and, according to a statement DMX issues the next day, the growling headliner is forbidden to play by promoters worried about incurring late fees. After 50 Cent, the lights switch on, and fans who paid upward of \$90 for their seats are ushered out without explanation — making the concert organizers the coldest hustlers of the evening. JONAH WEINER

HOW'D YOU LIKE THE SHOW? NASSAU COLISEUM, FEBRUARY 25, 2003



"BABY SHA" GOODLETT

29, RETAILER, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

"Clipse were hot. I'm from Virginia, too. I don't think it's good that they talk so much about drugs, but they're still young."



CARESSA ALEK-FINKELMAN

16, STUDENT, EAST MEADOW, NEW YORK

"50 Cent isn't that attractive, but his body makes up for it. He doesn't even need a bulletproof vest with that six-pack."



JOHN JOHN WALKER

25, ENTREPRENEUR, YONKERS, NEW YORK

"Jaheim was wack — he should have kept it to the pop shit and played fewer slow jams. He definitely needed a remix."



STEVEN POWERS

23, GRAPHIC DESIGNER, NEW YORK

"50 Cent lived up to the hype, but I think my girlfriend has a crush on him now. Nine bullet wounds? I don't even have that many cavities."

Let's Rock, Eh?

On her first tour, Canada's Avril Lavigne makes like a Metal Chick

AVRIL LAVIGNE

ANCIENNE BELGIQUE, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

MARCH 8, 2003 ★★☆☆

➤➤ "YOU KNOW MY SONGS, don't you?" Avril Lavigne barks at two Belgian teenagers, Sophie and Thomas. Alarmed, they shuffle and look at the floor.

On the first three nights of the defiantly named *Try to Shut Me Up!* tour, Lavigne has picked a boy and a girl from the crowd to help sing her skippy first hit, "Complicated." It's a cute move, even if Bono thought of it first, but it went awry two nights ago in Stockholm. "The last person didn't know my words," Lavigne warns her Belgian volunteers. "You do *know* the words, don't you?"

Averting an ugly scene, Sophie and Thomas are — to use Lavigne-speak — "frigging stars." The latter is a swanlike beauty twice Lavigne's height, with cap sleeves and excellent pipes; the former is a tone-deaf Belgian zit farm in a kind of rustic waistcoat. And they both know the words — all of them.

Lavigne, only 18, is a pro, and she expects 100 percent — even from her fans. Her precocious drive has brought her within spitting distance of 12 million global sales of her debut, *Let Go*. Proving herself live is the next step up the new-star ladder.

The newbie is learning fast. "Not going number two on the tour bus is the one main rule," she tells *Blender* after the show. "And no matter how big you are or how many records you sell, you still have to shower in shitholes."

Nineteen hundred of Lavigne's people are in Brussels tonight, roughly two-thirds female. Ferried here by dads with Yosemite Sam mustaches, they rock skinny ties (though Lavigne has lately done away with the look) and make the opening "Sk8er Boi" nearly inaudible.

Even across a language barrier, Lavigne and her constituency understand one another. Boys who smoke weed and brag to their friends are bad; "Should I put out?" and "What if his parents hate me?" are the questions that matter. For a legion of church-bred would-be wild children like herself, Lavigne is a soul mate, the problems page of *Teen People* made flesh.

Musically, she's a smart amalgam of modern influences. Her band's pop-punk racket is loud and only slightly glib, and up close her



Avril Lavigne: "Enough with the wind machine — you're ruining my comb-out."



singing is howitzer-strength and charmingly idiosyncratic, full of weird Canuck pronunciation (*peause* instead of *pose*; *werr-reld* instead of *world*).

But she lacks stagecraft — perhaps that's unsurprising, since her first headlining tour is also her first tour of any kind. Unsure whether to act the sulky punkette or the puppyish pop moppet, she seems static and detached, while pick-tossing guitarist Evan Taubenfeld performs much of the "Are ya awright, Brussels?" stuff.

Yet there are moments when Lavigne seems fully engaged. She wakes up for "Losing

Grip" — *Let Go*'s churning, heavy opener — and the slow, gothy "Unwanted," so it's suddenly easy to imagine her playing to audiences eight times as large. These are the songs she cowrote with Céline Dion/Sheena Easton collaborator Cliff Magness, and she favors them over the breezier pop-rock purveyed by part-Brit production trio the Matrix. "My live show is more rock than the record," Lavigne tells *Blender* later. "I prefer it that way." Which might be why she leaves "Complicated," her defining, adolescence-in-miniature hit, to be sung by guests.

Looking ahead, Lavigne sees more rock. The sting of her recent zero-Grammy haul will fade soon enough — "The majority of people who buy my records are my age. The Grammy voting committee . . . not so much," she notes wisely — and her spring tour of large U.S. coliseums will sharpen her act.

"Thanks for being my fans," she says giddily before leaving Brussels sated. Today, Belgium; tomorrow, the *werr-reld*. TONY POWER

Her band's racket is loud, her singing full of weird Canuck pronunciation.





go someplace better.





> Humanity's only hope is to kidnap a timid little Asian man called the Keymaker.

THE GOOD!

REALITY BITES BACK

The first of the year's two *Matrix* sequels is here — with another mind-twisting deluge of special effects. By Ted Lambert

THE MATRIX RELOADED

DIRECTED BY Larry and Andy Wachowski

STARRING Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving

>>> IN 1999, *The Matrix* saved sci-fi: Hollywood science-fiction had been blown off course by George Lucas and Jar-Jar Binks's sequel franchise for kids. Then the Wachowski Brothers arrived at just the right moment with bullet time, long leather coats and an illusory reality created by computers, where humans are just an energy source.

When we last left our messianic hero, Neo, the struggle to reconquer the planet was just beginning. *The Matrix Reloaded* cranks things up for him as well as freedom fighter Morpheus, tough broad Trinity and sinister G-man Agent Smith. The machines have found Zion — the hidden human city — and threaten to destroy it. Humanity's only hope is to kidnap a timid little Asian man called the Keymaker, who knows the location of every portal between the Matrix and the real world. But can Neo and company safely transport the Keymaker out of the Matrix?

The answer to that question is the film's action centerpiece — an extended car-and-motorcycle chase that reinvents the genre. As our heroes race along a busy freeway, reality-altering villains leap between speeding cars and trucks in pursuit. In another unforgettable scene, Neo once again goes *mano à mano* with Agent Smith, who has

been multiplied into a hundred clones for an epic fight scene that took a month to film.

Reloaded has great new characters, too: Jada Pinkett Smith plays Niobe, Morpheus's old flame; Monica Bellucci is Persephone, a beautiful temptress who tries to veer Neo off course; and Nona Gaye (Marvin's daughter) is the freedom fighter Zee. There's also a

pair of sinister villains who look like the blond pop twins Nelson re-invented as Rastafarian ghouls.

And if *Reloaded*'s ending leaves you hanging, there's good news: *The Matrix Revolutions*, the series' third installment, will hit theaters this fall. In the meantime, though, *The Matrix Reloaded* does just what its predecessor did: It blows the hatch off the sci-fi world.



"You raaaaang, dude?"

POP QUIZ! >>

Question: Are you living in an artificial dystopia generated by computers to fool you into conducting your day-to-day existence solely to provide energy for the machines that enslave humanity?

1 A mysterious stranger approaches you. He says . . .

- a) "Can you spare a dollar?"
- b) "I am the king of chrysanthemums! Bleeeragaghaghagah!"
- c) "Have you ever had a dream, Neo, that you were so sure was real?"

2 Someone fires a gun at your head. You . . .

- a) Die
- b) Shit yourself. Then die
- c) Perform an elaborate series of movements in which you can watch the bullet's trajectory in slow motion, then move gracefully out of its path

3 Laurence Fishburne is . . .

- a) That skinny kid who dances to "Satisfaction" in *Apocalypse Now*
- b) Available for work
- c) Morpheus, Lord of Dreams, gatekeeper of the dark pathways leading to a reality beyond the mundane platitudes of your everyday existence

If you answered . . .

Mostly a): No, you're not living in an artificial dystopia. Cheer up!
Mostly b): No. Sorry, life is just this bad.
Mostly c): Yes. But together we can use a lot of cutting-edge special effects to free the world and make sure this franchise keeps going until next fall.



Carrie-Anne Moss: She's "Mostly c)"



PEOPLE I KNOW

DIRECTED BY Daniel Algrant

STARRING Al Pacino, Tea Leoni, Kim Basinger, Ryan O'Neal

SERPICO, *THE Godfather*, *Scarface*... there are roles Al Pacino was born to play. Sadly, a pill-popping, gay, Southern, Jewish P.R. man in New York is not among them. In this confused melodrama, Pacino's doomed publicist tries to quietly spring a drugged-up TV starlet (Tea Leoni) from jail, but she dies on his watch — the same morning as the B-list-studded fundraiser he's throwing. Pacino stumbles around in a self-medicated stupor, and his languid drawl evokes Blanche Dubois. Worse, a bizarre Jewish-banking-conspiracy subplot has apparently been freighted in wholesale from another movie entirely.



THE DANCER UPSTAIRS

DIRECTED BY John Malkovich

STARRING Javier Bardem, Laura Morante

FOR ONCE, A great actor's directorial debut is neither a vanity project nor an insufferably artsy one. Malkovich's tale tracks an honest police detective (Javier Bardem) through a deliberately nameless Latin American city as he tries to unmask a terrorist leader known only as Ezekiel. Battling suicidal rebels and a military crackdown, the detective then becomes sexually obsessed with his daughter's ballet teacher. Bardem is fantastically watchable, and as he struggles to find a true path through a maze of corruption, betrayal and brutality, the film becomes ever more complex and intriguing.

Blender Approved

The best movies of the last three months



A MIGHTY WIND

The *Spinal Tap* gang returns to send up 1960s folk singers by singing, bickering and popping Valium.



ANGER MANAGEMENT

Adam Sandler terrorized by psychopathic therapist Jack Nicholson: Like *Punch Drunk Love*, only without the "love" part.

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?



MICHELLE BRANCH

Santana-friendly, folksy singer-songstress
"I see a lot of movies, and none of them are any good. Let's see... I just watched *State and Main* on a plane. Hey, that rhymes! *State and Main* on a plane! Cool!"

AND THE REST...

DON'T MISS



X-MEN 2

DIRECTED BY Bryan Singer

STARRING Patrick Stewart, Sir Ian McKellen, Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry

THE PITCH Mutants under fire! On the run! In the White House! It's the *X-Men* sequel!

THE VERDICT This ambitious follow-up has almost *too much* going on. But the final battle scene between good mutants, bad mutants and evil politicians provides great motivation... for the X-Men to kick racist human butt!



THE SHAPE OF THINGS

DIRECTED BY Neil LaBute

STARRING Rachel Weisz, Paul Rudd, Gretchen Mol, Fred Weller

THE PITCH A poor schmo meets a cool art-chick who changes his life.

THE VERDICT It's *In the Company of Men* in reverse: a woman manipulating a hapless man. The actors are great, especially Weisz, but the twist ending leaves the audience feeling as manipulated as the central character.

DON'T RUSH



OWNING MAHOWNY

DIRECTED BY Richard Kwietniowski

STARRING Philip Seymour Hoffman, Minnie Driver, John Hurt, Chris Collins

THE PITCH Based on the true story of a Toronto bank manager who stole bank money to cover his debts in Atlantic City and Vegas.

THE VERDICT Hoffman's disheveled hero is saddled with Driver as his dopey girlfriend and comes to a predictable end. The house — and Hurt's serpentine casino boss — always wins.



LEVITY

DIRECTED BY Ed Solomon

STARRING Billy Bob Thornton, Holly Hunter, Kirsten Dunst, Morgan Freeman

THE PITCH After spending 19 years in prison for killing another teen in an armed robbery, a man of few words searches for the dead boy's sister and a new lease on life.

THE VERDICT This preachy treatise on redemption is painfully earnest, yet the cast is so first-rate, nearly every scene is memorable.



THE GOOD THIEF

DIRECTED BY Neil Jordan

STARRING Nick Nolte, Tchéky Karyo, Nutsa Kukhianidze, Ralph Fiennes

THE PITCH A washed-up crook gets seduced into planning One Last Big Heist — to steal the art collection of a Monte Carlo casino.

THE VERDICT Like the gravel-voiced Nolte, the film itself is a little frayed around the edges. But it offers just enough sly deception and double-cross to pull it off.

DON'T BOTHER



CONFIDENCE

DIRECTED BY James Foley

STARRING Ed Burns, Dustin Hoffman, Rachel Weisz, Andy Garcia

THE PITCH A gang of ambitious young con artists converge to rip off an L.A. bank with the help of a neurotic, espresso-gulping mobster (Hoffman) and a pair of sleazy cops.

THE VERDICT The dialogue is painful, and it's tragic to have to watch Hoffman play second banana to the expressionless Ed Burns.

PEOPLE I KNOW: 'The Bad!' (Al Pacino, Tea Leoni); 'The Dancer Upstairs' (Javier Bardem, Laura Morante); 'A Mighty Wind' (The Spinal Tap); 'Anger Management' (Adam Sandler, Jack Nicholson); 'X-Men 2' (Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry); 'The Shape of Things' (Rachel Weisz, Paul Rudd); 'Owning Mahowny' (Philip Seymour Hoffman, Minnie Driver); 'Levity' (Billy Bob Thornton, Holly Hunter); 'The Good Thief' (Nick Nolte, Tchéky Karyo); 'Confidence' (Ed Burns, Dustin Hoffman).



Nicolas Cage uses and endorses Brillo Pads.

CAGEY!

Charlie Kaufman's genius movie about a writer who can't write, twin Nic Cages... and some orchids. By Clark Collis

ADAPTATION

DIRECTED BY

Spike Jonze

STARRING

Nicolas Cage, Meryl Streep, Chris Cooper, Tilda Swinton, Ron Livingston

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★★

BY FAR THE most pointless interview this writer ever conducted was with director Spike Jonze and screenwriter Charlie Kaufman. It was shortly before the release of *Being John Malkovich*, their brilliant debut collaboration, which I was looking forward to discussing with its creators. They, however, were not so eager. In fact, for an hour the pair met every question with obfuscation, irritation and, by the end, unintelligible mumbling.

Six months ago came their second joint venture, *Adaptation*, which, in Kaufman's case at least, revealed the screenwriter's infuriatingly withdrawn manner as not some shtick he laid on for journalists but his actual personality.

Adaptation is a fevered prowl through one man's brain.



Indeed, despite the still-vivid memory of those terrible 60 minutes, it's impossible not to feel sorry for this uncertain, heavily perspiring creature who, as portrayed by Nicolas Cage, takes on the task of adapting a book about orchids only to find that with his deadline looming, he has nothing to show for his efforts except sexual fantasies about the book's real-life author.

And of course, you can't put those in a screenplay — except that's exactly what Kaufman did, ultimately deciding not to adapt the book but write a screenplay about the hell he went through trying to do so — while inventing an idiot twin brother (also played by Cage) whose own Hollywood success merely accentuates Kaufman's loss of confidence.

The end product is a fantastic, fevered prowl through Kaufman's brain. It's marred by an absolutely rotten final act, which seems no less ill-conceived viewed now on DVD. But Cage's rightly lauded performances remain among his best, while Meryl Streep, Chris Cooper and *Office Space*'s always great Ron Livingston provide excellent backup. Maybe in their next movie, Jonze can explain why he had to be such a dick.

25TH HOUR

TOUCHSTONE HOME VIDEO

★★★★

Spike Lee's latest movie documents convicted drug dealer Ed Norton's last day of freedom before he begins a lengthy vacation in the big house. But in truth, it's three films in one: a thriller, a character study and a meditation on post-September 11 New York. (One scene featuring Norton's pals Philip Seymour Hoffman and Barry Pepper directly overlooks Ground Zero.) Though it feels too long and too crowded, it definitively (though unsurprisingly) demonstrates that Lee can handle a "white" story as well as a black one.

DARKNESS FALLS

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★

The Tooth Fairy must rank up there with Santa Claus and Gandhi as one of the least likely icons to generate its own horror franchise. Which largely explains why *Darkness Falls*, a film which attempts to do just that, can't help but look lame compared to, say, root-canal surgery — or pretty much anything else. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s Emma Caulfield is welcome eye candy, however, while the script contains a few good — if heavily outnumbered — intentional laughs.

FAR FROM HEAVEN

UNIVERSAL HOME VIDEO

★★★★★

Todd Haynes's tale of an exploding nuclear family will stand the test of time, thanks to brilliant lead performances by Dennis Quaid and Julianne Moore (as a '50s suburban businessman trying to "cure" himself of homosexuality, and his wife, who falls for their black gardener). It would have been 2002's best movie — were it not for the spectacular and awesome *Jackass*, a film featuring a grown man ramming a toy car up his butt, lest we forget.



The Osbournes: Yes, yes, Kelly. Swearing. We get the idea.

THE OSBOURNES THE FIRST SEASON

MIRAMAX HOME VIDEO

★★★★

The Osbournes has become so pervasive that reviewing the first season feels like reviewing air or water. (Air: terrific! Water: also nice! But wet!) The DVD's commentary track, in which the Osbournes talk about themselves talking about themselves, represents a new high-water mark in post-modernism. Other extras on this two-disc set include a "Too Oz for TV" blooper reel, Ozzy's Ten Commandments and new interviews.

ROGER DODGER

ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★

When advertising copywriter Campbell Scott gets dumped by boss Isabella Rossellini, he seeks vengeance on womankind by teaching his naive nephew, a teenage virgin, how to become a "ladies' man." What follows is an entertaining night of drunkenness and self-loathing only slightly ruined by the fact that Scott's character is so unpleasant that it's difficult to imagine him getting served at a restaurant, let alone laid. Bonus features include assorted commentaries and a "Player's Guide to Scoring With Women."



Darkness Falls: The Claustrophobics Anonymous meeting was not going well.



Solaris: Nothing feels better than taking a dump in your spacesuit.

SECRETARY

LIONS GATE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★★

Universally hailed as "that S&M movie," *Secretary* is certainly the only film you'll ever see in which typing errors are punished with a bit of buttock-thwacking. But Steven Shainberg's showcase for the talents of Maggie Gyllenhaal and

James Spader — and when did *he* get so good? — is less about titillation than true love (albeit a true love who tends to be firmly manacled). Features commentaries and deleted scenes.

SOLARIS

20TH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★

The most recent offering from George Clooney and director Steven Soderbergh is elegant, thoughtful, well-crafted and superbly acted, which is to be applauded. It is also a love story set in outer space, which is not. If you're a fan of both *Star Trek* and the word *meditative*, then by all means give it a shot. Everyone else should probably just wait for *Ocean's Twelve*.

STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME

PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO

★★★

Arguably the best in the series: the one where they travel back in time to San Francisco in search of whales and, as ever when it comes to William Shatner's Captain Kirk, some skirt. This release includes six hours of extras. No, really.



In *Secretary*, method actress Maggie Gyllenhaal took hours to deliver the mail.

Blender Approved

The best DVDs of the last three months



JACKASS

PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO

Firework-powered skates. Toy-car enemas. Vomit-producing wasabi inhalation. Is this really what the television was invented for? Yes!



THE JAM: THE COMPLETE JAM

UNIVERSAL CHRONICLES

Every TV performance and video from Paul Weller's high-octane (and impeccably dressed) mod trio, the crucial U.K. rockers of the late '70s and early '80s.

MUSIC DVDS

BY ROB KEMP AND JONAH WEINER



ICE CUBE

THE VIDEOS: VOLUME ONE

PRIORITY/CAPITOL

★★★★

As you'll recall, Ice Cube, the cuddly star of last year's *Barbershop*, used to frighten white people for a living — in N.W.A. and then as a solo artist. These 15 clips, spanning 1990 to 1993, are a testament to his onscreen intensity and include two masterpieces of hip-hop videocraft: "Be True to the Game," in which Cube kidnaps blacks whom he deems too "white" and "reeducates" them via black-Muslim dogma, and "Today Was a Good Day," an idyllic tale of 24 hours in Compton undisturbed by the LAPD.



DAVID BOWIE ZIGGY STARDUST AND THE SPIDERS FROM MARS

IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT

★★

This thirtieth-anniversary edition of D.A. Pennebaker's concert film of David Bowie's final performance as the mulleted, bisexual extra-terrestrial is something of a disappointment. It's grainy and poorly shot, and the *Ziggy* material is played with the elegance of a trash compactor.



AN EVENING WITH THE DIXIE CHICKS

COLUMBIA MUSIC VIDEO

★★★

The Chicks demonstrate expert bluegrass chops and limitless charm in this, the first public performance of the songs from their multiplatinum, quadruple Grammy-winning *Home*. The overwhelmingly suburban female audience in L.A.'s Kodak Theatre goes bananas throughout.



MANOWAR FIRE AND BLOOD

RAGNAR PRODUCTION

★★★

Which is the most ridiculous metal band in the history of the world? For 20 years, it's been New York's Manowar. A 1998 show in front of 30,000 in São Paulo, Brazil, shows why: choreographed hair-flinging, a solo bass rendition of "The Flight of the Bumblebee" and onstage proclamations of the glory of "heavy ... fucking ... metal."



DJ QUIK VISUALISM: THE SOUND OF ART INTO VISION

IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT

★★

"Niggas in Compton ain't supposed to live past 25," DJ Quik proclaims. The 32-year-old cult hip-hopper has a lot to celebrate, then. This all-access homage chronicles packed L.A. shows, pricey liquor and autographed panties — even if some of it is more mundane than exciting.



PETER GABRIEL SECRET WORLD LIVE

UNIVERSAL MUSIC VIDEO

★★

Gone are the days when onetime Genesis frontman Peter Gabriel would traipse across concert halls dressed like a chrysanthemum. Too bad. By 1992's *Secret World* tour, spectacular lights and songs from that year's album *Us* fail to compensate for his hoarse singing and clumsy hoofing.



Joy Division's Ian Curtis, in another unnecessary sulk about where he left his coat

DARK STUFF

Black and white and miserable all over — it's a new collection of Joy Division photos. By John Harris

LOVE WILL TEAR US APART

By Kevin Cummins

VISION ON PUBLISHING, \$30

★★★★

▶▶ WHEN JOY DIVISION'S Ian Curtis committed suicide in May 1980, he swiftly defined an earnest, black-clad cult that prevails to this day: Scratch any number of modern musicians (Moby, Billy Corgan, Courtney Love) and you tend to find a Joy Division disciple lurking underneath.

Aside from the music they recorded for *Unknown Pleasures* (1979) and the following year's posthumously issued *Closer*, the band's cultural potency was also founded in Curtis's iconic charisma — as proved by this collection of uniformly monochrome pictures by veteran British photographer Kevin Cummins, a punk-era contemporary of Joy Division's

who shares their roots in Manchester, the grimy English city whose ambience oozed into all of the band's music.

Certainly, Cummins's shots of the group posing awkwardly against Manchester's endlessly gray expanse — made yet more soulless by a thick layer of snow — serve to confirm that Joy Division's sound was anchored in their environment.

Cummins's live pictures, meanwhile, show that Curtis was a compelling poster boy for a doomed kind of alienation: Few musicians have ever looked either so compellingly lost in their performance or as desperately trapped in their own skin as he did.

Best of all, however, are a clutch of photos taken in the band's shabby rehearsal space, in which there's a palpable sense of the shadows closing in. Here in particular, Curtis's premature demise lends Cummins's pictures a priceless kind of drama.



BONNIE RAITT STILL IN THE NICK OF TIME

By Mark Bego

COOPER SQUARE PRESS, \$17

"Do you ever get tired of fried chicken or chocolate or the Rolling Stones or great sex?" Bonnie Raitt once said, explaining why she'll be a rock & roller till they nail her coffin lid down. Raitt is all character: daughter of a Hollywood musical star, mistress of R&B slide guitar, champion of old bluesmen, oft-arrested political activist. Got addicted, recovered, got fat, got slim, married late, divorced later, found chart fame at 40 ... and Mark Bego has missed her entirely. No stories, no insights, no worthwhile original interviews. A new final chapter, updating the 1995 version, only augments his sins of omission. He was pushed for time, probably; after all, since that first edition Bego has published 15 other star biographies.

PHIL SUTCLIFFE



CLASSIC MATERIAL THE HIP-HOP ALBUM GUIDE

Edited by Oliver Wang

ECW PRESS, \$16

Hip-hop is a cannibal, chomping on other genres and its own history to feed an insatiable appetite for fresh sounds and styles. Rap writer Oliver Wang's slim guide molds a canon out of the mess, reconsidering the greats (Tupac and Biggie) and giving praise to some deserving lesser-knowns (Cannibal Ox). David Toop illuminates proto-beatmaster Afrika Bambaataa, kris ex big-ups Big Daddy Kane, and Serena Kim tours Mobb Deep's housing projects, but the book suffers from a clichéd purist sentiment, over-representing indies and bohos, glibly dismissing "the mainstream" and chastising misogyny while spotlighting only three women. Adding Lil' Kim and Missy Elliott would have been the first step toward making this project less lopsided.

JONAH WEINER



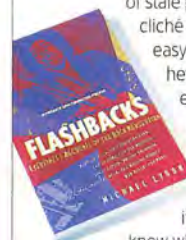
FLASHBACKS EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE ROCK REVOLUTION

By Michael Lydon

ROUTLEDGE, \$18

The managing editor of *Rolling Stone* and a *Newsweek* music reporter in

the '60s, Michael Lydon was on the scene with all of the era's most influential bands and events. He interviewed the Beatles in 1966 (capturing both John Lennon's sarcastic friendliness and Paul McCartney's soapy charm). He attended both the hippie-dream Monterey Pop festival and the nightmare Altamont. He interviewed Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, the Grateful Dead and others too numerous to mention. Lydon was there so much and so often, in fact, you'll search in vain for his Woodstock review or his making-of-*Sgt. Pepper's* report. Best as a reporter and eyewitness — his tales of meetings with Joplin and Morrison are refreshingly free of stale posthumous



cliché — Lydon's less easy to read when he's analyzing events in a prose style that's part breathless, part baroque. But if you want to know what it was like to be in a dressing room with the Rolling Stones in 1969, attend a Bob Dylan show in 1974 or simply go to a concert that made you feel optimistic about the future of mankind, then this is the book for you.

DAVID QUANTICK

HEARTACHES BY THE NUMBER COUNTRY MUSIC'S 500 GREATEST SINGLES

By David Cantwell and Bill Friskics-Warren

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY PRESS/COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION PRESS, \$28

It's hard to make country music's fertile terrain of cheatin' hearts and mystery trains seem as flat as Kansas, but *Heartaches by the Number* nearly succeeds. Authors

David Cantwell and Bill Friskics-Warren made these 500 subjective picks using historical and musical significance as criteria, and thus their 320-page tome is heavy on Hank, skimpy on Shania. While *Heartaches* may provide a valuable C&W primer, it's sorely in need of some enlivening photos and juicy anecdotes alongside the highfalutin references to "sixth-century Roman sophist Boethius." The fun-averse authors won't even speculate what Billie Joe McAllister threw off the Tallahatchie Bridge in Bobbie Gentry's "Ode to



Billie Joe," instead repeating the *Oxford American's* pointy-headed assertion that what got tossed was "the collective innocence of the American people." Followed, one might imagine, by this book.

PAULINE O'CONNOR

NALDA SAID

By Stuart David

☆☆☆ TURTLE POINT PRESS, \$15

Considering his previous job as bassist for Scotland's Belle and Sebastian, the world's most sensitive indie band, it was never likely that Stuart David's career as a novelist would involve writing Tom Clancy-style blockbusters. Indeed, *Nalda*

Said carries the same whiff of melancholic nostalgia as Belle and Sebastian's music. Narrated by a nameless man crippled by shyness and convinced by his grandmother that his father, a thief, has hidden a priceless jewel in his stomach, *Nalda Said* is gently affecting. At times a little precious, the narrative nonetheless deftly blurs fantasy and imagination, pulling its sympathetic characters to a glum finale. Indie girls, one suspects, will love it.

ALEXIS PETRIDIS

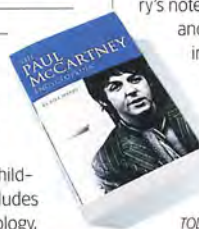


THE PAUL MCCARTNEY ENCYCLOPEDIA

By Bill Harry

☆☆☆ VIRGIN BOOKS, \$20

Even the most overeducated trainspotter should find Bill Harry's exhaustive 935-page cinderblock a reliable resource. Harry, a childhood McCartney friend, includes a detailed 159-page chronology,



starting in 1866 with McCartney's grandfather's birth. Otherwise, Harry's notes on singles' release dates and studio lineups offer little insight into Macca's songwriting but do raise some eyebrows: He credits Ted Kennedy with helping spring McCartney from a Tokyo jail after his 1980 cannabis arrest.

TODD PRUZAN

POSSESSED: THE RISE AND FALL OF PRINCE

By Alex Hahn

☆☆☆☆ BILLBOARD BOOKS, \$25

There's an object lesson in *Possessed*, the most comprehensive and scathing biography yet of the "Minneapolis Marvel": Karma is a bitch. Throughout the 1980s, Prince's cavalier treatment of bedmates, bandmates and sundry underlings was tolerated (the fact that he sold millions of innovative records may have had something to do with it). But when the hits dried up, so did the goodwill. Lawyer-turned-writer Alex Hahn's thesis, that Prince lost touch with reality during his late-'80s peak, is supported by interviews with insiders. They detail his bizarre campaign against his former label, Warner Bros., accusations that he could have prevented the crib death of his only child in 1996 and, surprisingly, given his teetotaler's reputation, insinuations of a mid-'90s cocaine habit.

ROB KEMP



Prince parties like it's 1999 — tragically unaware that by then, his career will be in the toilet.

THE BEST PART OF A BIG BOOK!

Cincinnati, 1982: Prince gets jealous of his funk-soul brothers in the Time and attacks them with Doritos until a handcuffed guitarist goes berserk. . . .

>> DURING THEIR OPENING set, the Time found themselves being pelted by eggs from offstage. Gradually, they realized that Prince and some of his band members were the culprits. The barrage increased, and, toward the end of the set, Prince and his accomplices abducted Jerome Benton, a dancer for the group, from the stage and poured honey all over him. Then they pelted him with garbage. . . .

Then, as the Time's set ended, [Prince bodyguard] Chick Huntzberry grabbed [Time guitarist] Jesse Johnson and hauled him to Prince's dressing room. There, Huntzberry handcuffed Johnson to a horizontal coat rack bolted into a brick wall. Prince came in and began taunting Johnson and tossing Doritos chips and other pieces of food at him. "This is what you

get for talking about my mama!" Prince shouted. . . .

Humiliated and frightened, Johnson writhed in his cuffs. Finally, to the amazement of the onlookers, he managed to rip the entire twelve-foot-long coat rack out of the wall. His hands were still cuffed to the rack, which he began swinging wildly. . . .

At the end of the show, as Prince and his band left the stage, the Time began hurling eggs and other items at them. Prince's team responded by throwing yet more food as the fight spilled into the backstage area. The road managers, in a bid to help the two groups vent hostility short of real violence, had dozens of cream pies brought in for the combatants to use as ammunition. The Time now had the advantage, having donned plastic bags to avoid having their clothes ruined.

"This is what you get for talking about my mama!" Prince shouted.

Excerpted from the book *Possessed: The Rise and Fall of Prince*. Copyright © 2003 by Alex Hahn. Published by Billboard Books. Reprinted by permission.

Blender Approved

The best books of the last three months

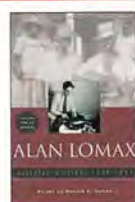


SONGBOOK

By Nick Hornby

McSWEENEY'S

The Britpop novelist pens encomiums to his favorite songs in a surprisingly heartfelt, poignant collection.



ALAN LOMAX: SELECTED WRITINGS

Edited by Ronald D. Cohen

ROUTLEDGE

Thoughtful essays by the legendary chronicler of American folk music.



AUTO MODELLISTA

CAPCOM — PS2

★★★★

DRIVING WHILE FAMOUS

Whatever you do, don't get in the car when a rich celeb is behind the wheel...

HALLE BERRY

2000: Runs a red in a Chevy Blazer, smashes a car, flees. Her defense: impaired judgment due to cracked head. Later wins an Oscar (but not for this performance).

ROBERT DOWNEY JR.

1996: Weaves through Malibu in a pickup — with some smack, some coke and a revolver on board! Woo-hoo!

MATTHEW PERRY

2000: Smashes his Porsche into someone's front porch. Sheesh — some Friend!

DIANA ROSS

2002: Stopped for DUI, she writes out the alphabet, skipping / and /, and adding an extra C and S. Shoulda studied!



"Drunk? Nonsense, ossifer!"

STREETCAR OF DESIRE

Soup up your ride and then burn some losers online. *All right!* By Alex Porter

➤➤ REMEMBER *Speed Racer*? Remember *Wacky Races*? Remember the O.J. Simpson chase? (OK, never mind that one.) Auto Modellista's candy-colored cars streaking across the screen to pulsing tunes will bring back fond memories of spacing out to all those classic automotive TV moments.

But take a look under the hood, and you'll find as much substance as style. Hondas, Mazdas, Nissans, Toyotas — start the game by choosing a make and model from more than 50 choices, and then head to the virtual garage to customize it with turbochargers, mufflers, suspension, racing slicks and other options. Your tweaks will affect the way the car handles in play, so after you've souped up your ride, it's pretty easy to dust your computerized competition on Japanese streets, mountain roads and racetracks.

But it's much more fun to go online through PS2's

Network Adapter to compete with as many as eight human competitors, who customize their cars with bizarre colors, decals and graffiti. Real players are far more challenging than what the game provides — plus, you can hang out in the virtual parking lot, watching other races in progress and talking smack through text messaging.

Best of all is the "VJ Theater" option, which permits you to save and edit your race footage, selecting camera angles, creating split-screen visual effects and laying down a soundtrack for your own do-it-yourself a-ha video with trance electronica or guitar-heavy electronic grooves and amusingly cheesy exclamations: "Speedy!" "Oh, no!" "Keep on rockin'!"

Auto Modellista's trippy details keep it laps ahead of the typical gearhead racing game. Up next — well, we hope: Auto Modellista DUI.



NBA STREET VOLUME 2

EA SPORTS BIG — PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE

Old-school legends like Wilt the Stilt and Clyde the Glide mix it up with Yao Ming, Kevin Garnett and other current NBA stars on trash-strewn urban courts (with pudgy, mulleted teammates). Wild, loose play (alley-ooping, crazy crossovers, dramatic dunks) set to exclusive Nelly cuts. ★★★★★



CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW

KONAMI — GAMEBOY ADVANCE

Another installment in the vampire-action epic with the cheese-o-rific Anne Rice story line. You're trying to escape Castle Dracula by running, jumping, smiting beasts and absorbing the souls of foes. Big fun, but it's for tykes, so play it on Nintendo's pager-size GameBoy Advance SP to avoid funny looks. ★★★



EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES

VERANT INTERACTIVE — PS2

Nerd alert! The addictive PC role-playing game finally comes to the PlayStation. Be all you can be (elf, gnome, barbarian, warrior, druid, wizard, whatever) and head online to engage in violent quests with other players. Steal loot! Kill monsters! Lose sleep, friends, dignity! ★★



KNIGHT RIDER

DAVILEX — PC

David "Huge in Germany" Hasselhoff is finally back from the '80s, this time in a video game about a man and his crime-fighting automobile. It's a promising premise, but the monotonous missions, middling graphics and cruddy handling will probably have players locking this one away with their *Airwolf* and *Manimal* Beta tapes. ★

Blender Approved

The best games of the last three months



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

ATARI — XBOX

In this twitchy first-person shooter, log on to Xbox Live, meet interesting people — and then kill them.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

NINTENDO — GAMECUBE

Take cute lil' Link on a cartoony (and riveting) epic journey to find his lost sister. Then reunite 'em. Awww.

WIN THIS XM SKY FI SATELLITE RADIO!

>>> HOWZABOUT THIS, YO? It's a XM Sky Fi Satellite Radio with 100 channels! Just solve this puzzle, read the official rules at blender.com, cut out your completed version and send it to the address below. Make sure we get your answer and contact info by May 13, 2003. We'll choose a winner at random and post the winner's name at blender.com/crossword. Yes!

Send your completed puzzle to Blender Puzzle Contest,
1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018.



WIN ME!

PENCIL ME IN!

Hey, it's *Blender's* crossword! Starring 15 Across!

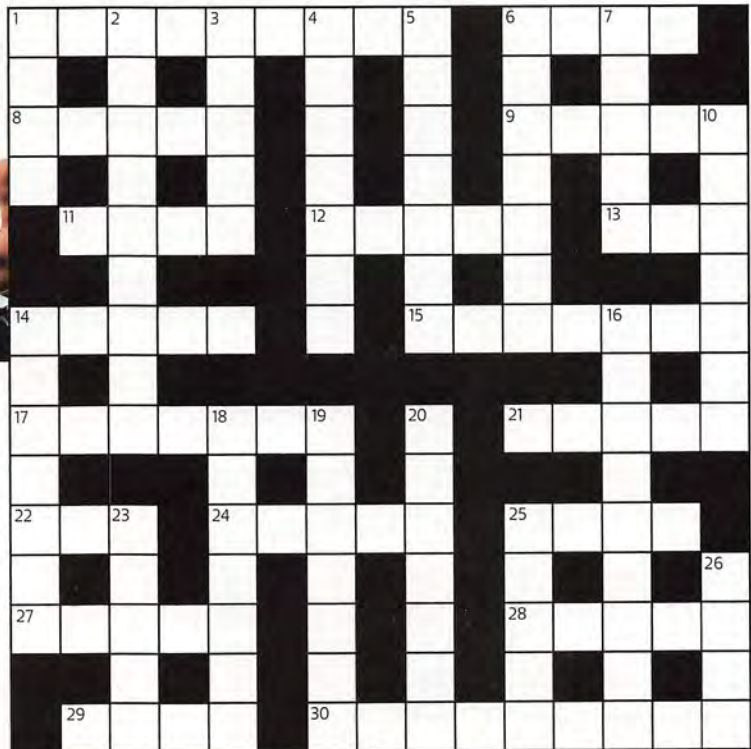
BY BRENDAN QUIGLEY

ACROSS

- 1 All-girl group that wants you to take it off (two words)
- 6 Gene and Dean, who sang of chocolate and cheese
- 8 Hall's mustachioed songwriting partner
- 9 A girl named Stevie
- 11 Aussie band behind "Suicide Blonde"
- 12 Ryan or Bryan
- 13 Lisa Lopes's stage name: Left ____
- 14 Sam, who sang "Wonderful World" and "Cupid"
- 15 Skynyrd's "Sweet Home" state
- 17 What that deaf, dumb, blind kid sure played a mean game of
- 21 Weird Al's first Michael Jackson spoof (two words)
- 22 "I am the ____ man, I am the walrus"
- 24 ____ H, group that once kept it copacetic
- 25 All she wants to do is have some fun
- 27 Garfunkel's better half
- 28 With ivory, it lives together in perfect harmony
- 29 One alterna-pop band was better than ____
- 30 He says your body is a wonderland (two words)

DOWN

- 1 Maynard James Keenan's day job
- 2 He said Saturday night's all right for fighting (two words)
- 3 Not "Beatlemania" — but an incredible simulation!
- 4 Their grungy singer died in 1994 — and they had their last hit in 2002
- 5 Elder-statesman guitarist with eight Grammys
- 6 50 Cent's first hit
- 7 What 50 Cent is, by trade
- 10 The Police: Sting, Andy and ____
- 14 Pot-anthem rappers ____ Hill
- 16 The Beatles' gigantic book/CD/DVD career-retrospective series
- 18 Outkast's hometown
- 19 Rapper starring in 2003's *Deliver Us From Eva* (four words)
- 20 Singer of the posthumous hit "Miss You"
- 23 Britpop band with a Spanish name
- 25 Trio with hit "Sunshine of Your Love"
- 26 Led Zeppelin's "____ Mak'er"



POP HISTORY! June 1620: Christina Aguilera kills off the last dodo! Written by Clark Collis Illustrated by Daniel Hansen

The demise of the dodo can be linked to an early Christina Aguilera video featuring a codpiece made of a dodo's head.

It wasn't long before the star's young, impressionable fan base followed her fashion lead en masse.

And that's how Christina Aguilera came to slay the last dodo. Sadly, she was only getting started.



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She's the sexy, 4-foot-11 hip-hop diva who has dubbed herself the "black Pamela Anderson," wants to "touch you" with her presence and would happily trade places with God. Which only begins to address the conundrum...

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUDSON BAKER

WHO DOES **LIL' KIM** THINK SHE IS?

What's that elaborate pencil sketch you drew, Kim?

It's a queen angel, the highest height of an angel. God sent me into this world on a mission: to touch people with my voice, my presence.

It's a nice little drawing.

Yeah, I've always been good at art or, like, architecting. If I wasn't doing music, I would be either an architect, a psychiatrist or a designer.

What was your nickname when you were a kid?

They've always called me Lil' Kim, even in second grade — I was always little.

Guess that was before the implants. What do you spend too much money on?

I think I spend the right amount of money for who I am. I could probably spend more.

What's the most you've ever spent in a day?

Maybe close to 250.

Two hundred and fifty thousand?

When was that?

Christmas, when I shop for family and friends. I also buy myself something.

We'd love to have you as a Secret Santa.

If you were a man, who would you want to be?

Is that a trick question?

Uh, no.

I would want to be God.

That's a big promotion from queen.

Or maybe Allen Iverson. He maintains his childhood personality, and I wouldn't

mind having all those tattoos. And he's little, for a basketball player.

Who do people say you look like?

They call me the black Pamela Anderson. We don't look alike; it's just what we portray: sex symbols.

What makes you feel sexy?

Just dressing up, putting on makeup, getting my hair done. I think I'm naturally sexy. *[Adjusts a false eyelash]* Either you have it or you don't.

When a man steps up to you, do you want him to bling?

I love pinkie rings. I love watches — but a nice, expensive watch. If a man has a cheap watch, that may mean he's a bit cheap. And I don't want that.

Not at \$250,000 a day. What

have you learned about men that you didn't know when you were younger?

You have to be careful, because the man you're attracted to is not always the man who's good for you. It's not that all men are fucked up — it's just that the men I've chosen were fucked up.

How would you characterize your taste in sex?

My taste in sex is... very sexy. Romantic. I love to have sex, so that means me and my partner could basically do anything. Some people like to fuck. I like to have sex. Rather than just because I'm horny.

What scares you?

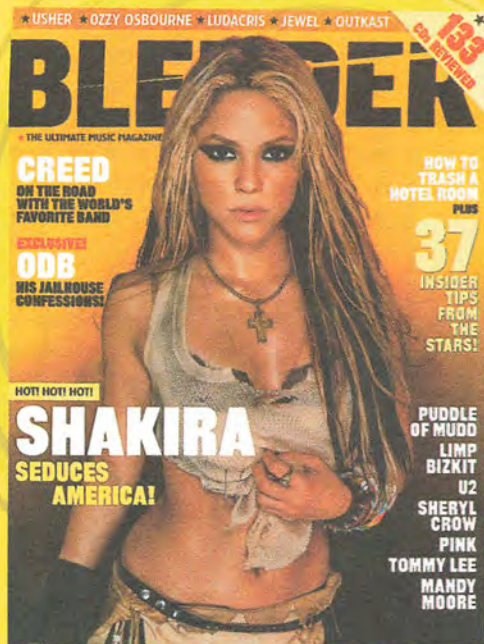
I don't like any kind of creepy animal. I'm not trying to be petting a lion. I'm a city girl.

So you won't be hosting a nature show on the Discovery Channel anytime soon?

Not if I have to pet a lion! *[BLENDER]*

TIGHTS STYLIST'S OWN; BOOTS BY
NANA; JEWELRY LIL' KIM'S OWN





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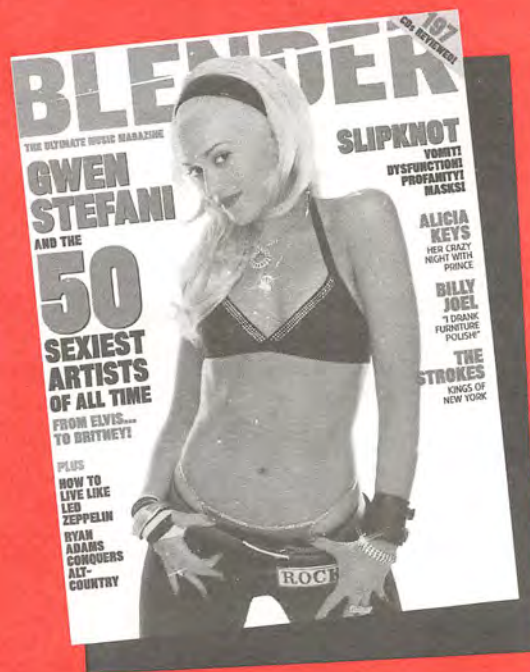
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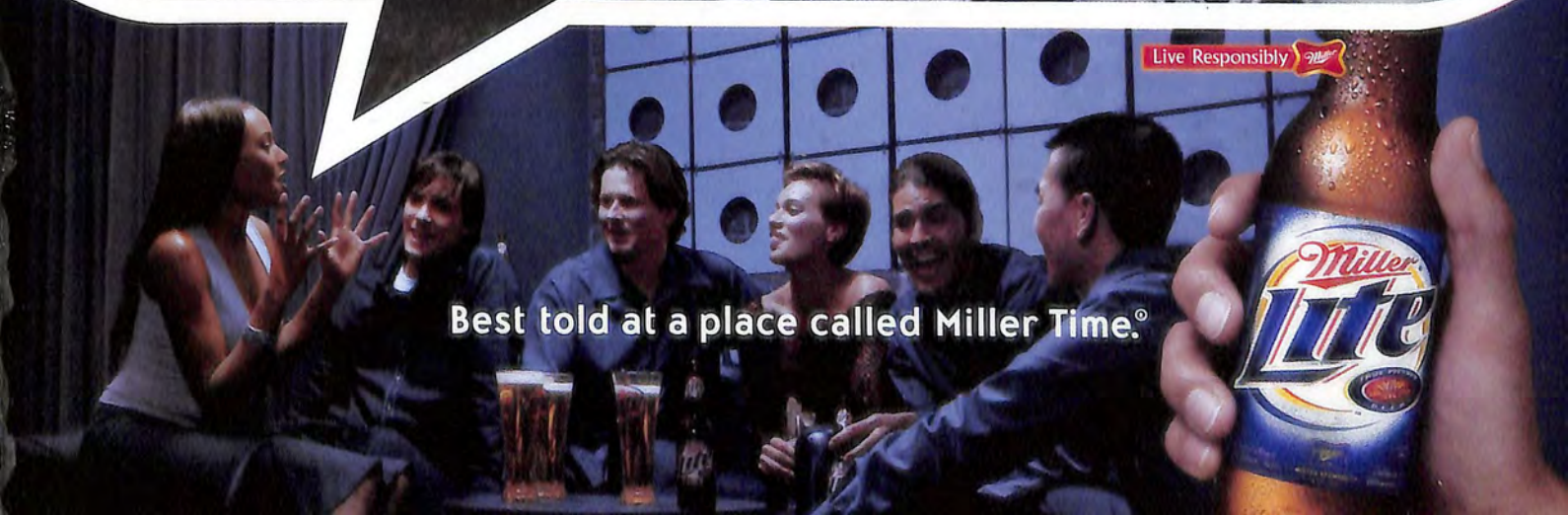
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A man and a woman are leaning over the side of a white boat, smiling and looking towards the camera. The man is shirtless, wearing a silver watch and a chain with a dog tag. The woman is wearing a white bikini top. A rope is tied around the necks of three SKYY BLUE cans that are floating in the blue water below the boat. The cans are blue with white text and are partially submerged, creating a splash.

SKYY BLUE